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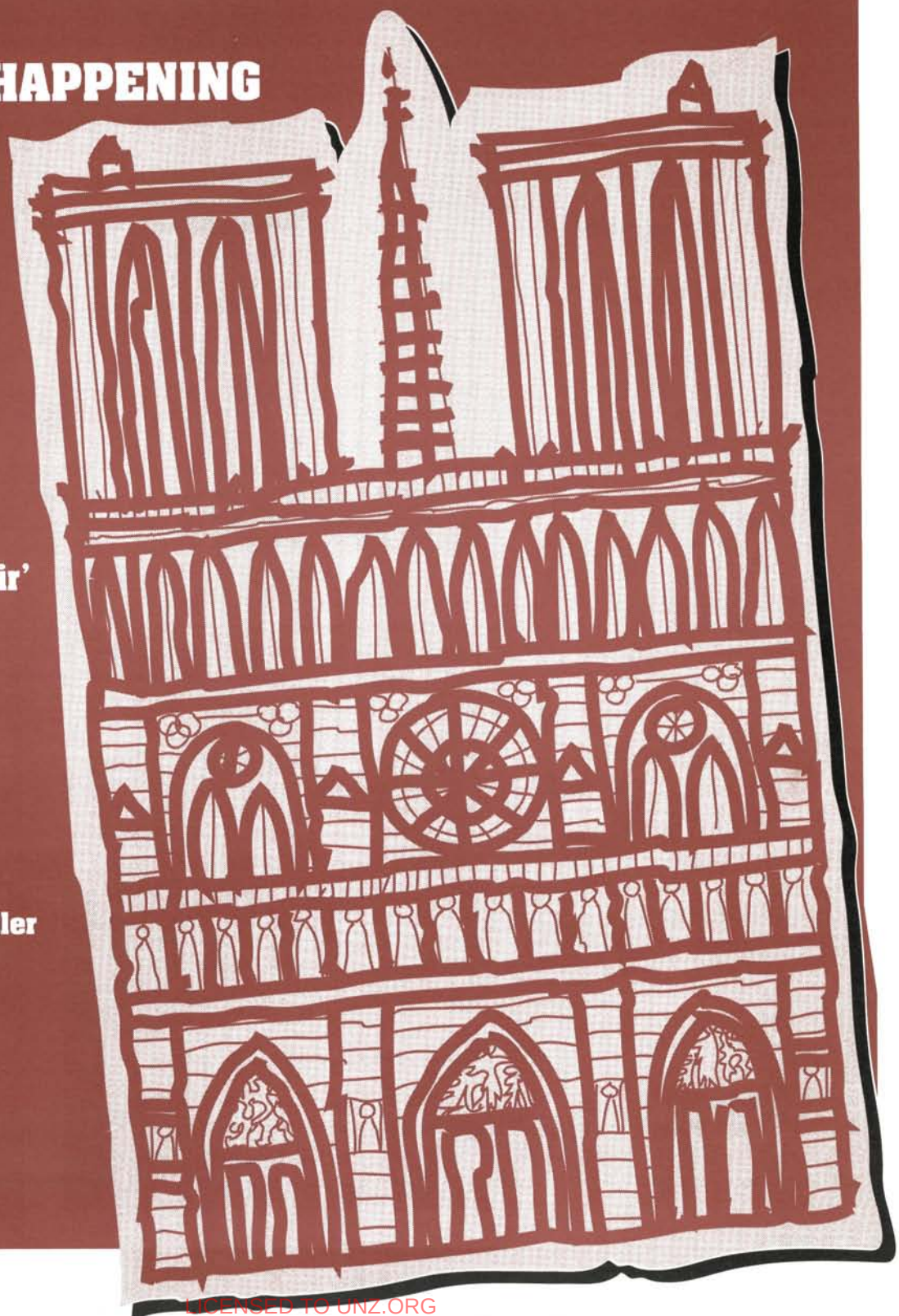
COMMONWEAL

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE FRENCH CHURCH
Steven Englund

DAVID O'CONNELL
François Mauriac's 'Le cahier noir'



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CORRESPONDENCE

Lessons from Danny

Portland, Oreg.

To the Editors: May I quickly but as fervently as possible thank and commend you for printing "Things Danny Taught Me," by Francis X. Maier [March 26]. And salutations to Mr. Maier for emerging as a poet, theologian, philosopher—and, more crucial still—father who embodies and conveys the glory and strength of the teachings of Jesus Christ. Count me as one who has been instructed and inspired by that heartwarming article.

PATRICK M. McNAMARA, O.S.M.

Wrong choice

Cape May, N.J.

To the Editors: The editorial in your issue of March 26, "No right choice," is aptly titled; there are indeed no easy answers to the killings of so many innocent, unarmed or poorly armed people in Bosnia-Herzegovina. But your proposed alternative—that arms be supplied to the Bosnian Muslims so that they can defend themselves—would only expand the war and increase the carnage. Surely the U.S. should not initiate any such move, nor supply arms or money for arms.

MARGARET P. CASSIDY

'Lorenzo's Oil'

Newtonville, Mass.

To the Editors: I agree that *Lorenzo's Oil* is an excellent movie, but Richard Alleva's review [March 12] has a serious, even dangerous, flaw. Though the film's characterizations and the emotions it portrays and elicits are true, the claims it makes for cure have not been proved, and may be false. In the *Lancet* for February 27, Hugo Moser, who identifies himself as the model for the film's Dr. Nicolai, says that the film, which he admires, is in crucial ways a fiction; that the interactions between the Odones and the medical establishment have been cooperative, not hostile; that the movie's depiction of the adrenoleukodystrophy [ALD] parent group is "inaccurate and mean-spirited"; and that the treatment the Odones developed is currently under rigorous study and does not, so far, appear to be a cure for ALD. Newspaper articles in the United States also dispute the movie's medical claims, and parents of children with ALD have been quoted as saying that the movie's claims are cruel, because untrue.

One can honor the intentions and accomplishments of the Odones, the actors who play them, and the movie's scriptwriters and director, and still maintain wholesome skepticism. Like many people—perhaps including the Odones and Richard Alleva—I am irritated at and troubled by the frequency and pervasiveness of medical arrogance and authoritarianism. *Lorenzo's Oil* is a true artistic rendition of how strong, brave, passionate people can and do act in dreadful circumstances. Still, it is a mistake to accept and present an unsubstantiated story—a movie version of the truth—as necessarily factual. Alleva gives no indication that he's well-enough informed about ADL and possible treatments for it to be able to evaluate the movie's claims, and yet he passes them on as true. In doing so, he perpetuates misconceptions that lead to socially self-defeating mistrust of often life-saving conventional scientific investigation and custom. Moreover, presenting a subjective telling of one family's experience as replicable, successful therapy when it probably is not, adds to the already horrendous burden of afflicted families struggling to find a way through hope, despair, and medical advice.

MADELINE MARGET

The writer is the author of Wise Blood *(Simon & Schuster, 1992), excerpted in* Commonweal, *March 27, 1992.*

The reviewer replies:

Madeline Marget renders a great service by reminding me and the readers that life is never as tidy as it seems in the movies, even the best movies. Thanks to her, I will follow in the press the investigations of the Odones' treatment with considerable interest and, I hope, the healthy skepticism that Marget recommends, all the while continuing to honor the esthetic and emotional triumphs of the George Miller film.

I am also grateful to Marget for giving me the opportunity to point out that, whenever I review a movie based on fact, I am seldom, if ever, subscribing to, or attacking, the opinions or agendas of those films. If Marget rereads my entire column, including its comments on *Scent of a Woman*, she will find that it is mainly an essay on the way acting does or doesn't validate a script.

But my most culpable statement—"The title of the movie is the outcome of their investigation: a cure for the disease that has saved many afflicted children over the last decade"—was in response to the very last shot of the movie, an assemblage of the faces of numerous children that the film clearly claims were saved by "the oil." If there is substantial doubt about the cause of their cures, then the recklessness of the filmmakers is as great as their talent. Bravo to Ms. Marget for casting a little cold water on my naiveté. The real pain of real people is always more important than esthetics.

RICHARD ALLEVA

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COMMONWEAL

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STAFF

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Publisher: Edward S. Skillin

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Unreasonable ambitions

Violence is anathema to all but fringe elements of the prolife movement. Still, in the aftermath of Dr. David Gunn's senseless murder outside an abortion clinic in Florida, some prochoice groups are eager to link mainstream anti-abortion sentiment to the actions of extremists. The perils of such a strategy are exemplified in the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act now before Congress. The bill's disregard for constitutional guarantees of free speech and assembly should make every prochoice civil libertarian blush.

This is crude, hardball politics, but it is not without its own sad irony. Civil suits brought by abortion clinics and others that asked and got confiscatory damages have effectively bankrupted groups such as Operation Rescue. We have never applauded Operation Rescue's methods of protest, but in destroying whatever organizational structure might have impeded the lawless actions of some individuals, has this prochoice strategy really been wise? To now further intimidate or even disenfranchise anti-abortion protesters engaged in peaceful civil disobedience will surely marginalize such people even more. Isn't the result likely to be more anarchy, not any movement toward the resolution of this tortuous issue? Can any of us afford that?

At some point, all those engaged in this dispute must recognize that the struggle over abortion should not require the unconditional surrender of either side. As prochoice groups and their friends in Congress move to absolutize the right to abortion through the Access and Freedom of Choice acts, and by lifting the ban on federal funding for abortions, they should keep in mind the mixed consequences of their previous successes. At the same time, radical anti-abortion activists must recognize that each act of violence or harassment only adds to the persuasiveness of the case made by those who say that any restriction of abortion represents an "undue burden" placed on women exercising what our highest court says is a constitutional right.

The Freedom of Access bill highlights the dangers to liberty courted by the unrestrained political ambition the abortion question generates. The bill, designed to make the "obstruction" of clinic entrances a federal felony, is worded so broadly yet aimed so specifically at anti-abortion protesters as to threaten the repression of even peaceful protest. Indeed, since the vast majority of demonstrations are peaceful, it is hard to imagine what legitimate remedies such a law might provide to those seeking abortion. Surely blockading clinics, like blockading the entrances to nuclear power plants or even military bases, is already a violation of local and state laws. Should there be a law making peaceful civil disobedience at the entrance to a military base a federal felony? Or, as this law proposes for those confronted by anti-abortion protesters, should soldiers or sailors be entitled to civil damages for "emotional distress" caused by antimilitary protesters? (The parallel here is legal,

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not moral or emotional.)

Suffice it to say, the proposed statute, which punishes anti-abortion obstruction of clinics but specifically exempts any obstruction by those involved in a labor dispute, is unconstitutional on its face. Such "content-based" prohibitions are a denial of First Amendment rights, since they outlaw only those acts that are the expression of an identifiable point of view. "Whoever, with intent to prevent or discourage any person from obtaining reproductive health services..." is the kind of thinking the Freedom of Access bill would punish. If a demonstrator's intent is to prevent or discourage a parsimonious boss from entering the clinic, that's not a federal concern. Opposition to abortion is what this law is meant to curb.

The bill's criminal and civil penalities, up to three years in jail for previous offenders and treble damages for those experiencing pain and suffering, are further efforts to "chill" political speech. Doubtless the distress of women entering clinics confronted by anti-abortion protesters is real. But all our freedoms ultimately rest upon the First Amendment; it must not be held hostage even to the anguish of women seeking "reproductive services." The Access bill is precisely targeted; it would render the First Amendment null and void for those who oppose abortion.

More broadly, the Clinton administration's apparent determination to expand access to abortion is more than a political mistake; it is a tragedy. Americans as a people are irrevocably divided on this question. Although the murder of Dr. Gunn has undoubtedly diminished the perceived moral stature of the pro-life movement, neither abortion absolutists nor abolitionists can claim anything like a popular majority. At the moment, the Democrats in Congress seem intent on pushing back what few restrictions now apply to abortion. Many Americans, however, think the Court erroneous in its discovery of an ostensible "right" to abortion, and find current U.S. abortion practice a moral travesty at least partly analogous to the nation's long denial of constitutional protections to blacks.

Indeed, with each passing year the much-remarked-upon parallel between *Roe* v. *Wade* and the notorious *Dred Scott* decision (1857) becomes more poignant. In *Dred Scott*, the Supreme Court managed to find no legal protection for "Negroes" in the Constitution, and further astounded its critics by ruling that no territory or new state could prohibit slavery even if it voted to do so. As Abraham Lincoln, the most eloquent and steadfast opponent of *Dred Scott*, characterized the moral and political bankruptcy of the Court's decision: "That if any *one* man, choose to enslave *another*, no *third* man shall be allowed to object."

Lincoln was not an abolitionist. Slavery, he recognized, was a historical fact that mere reason or moral exhortation could not miraculously untangle or uproot. But in *Dred Scott*'s expansion of the "rights" of slaveholders Lincoln recognized a logic both inimical to self-government and false to this nation's historical promise of equality, and the protection of life and liberty, for all. He pledged to resist the decision peaceably but resolutely.

Similarly, in a country as vast and varied as this, no question as morally complex and socially divisive as abortion can be resolved by an edict from Washington. Unilateral federal decisions ignore the deeply held convictions of too many citizens. "When he invites any people willing to have slavery, to establish it," Lincoln said of anyone who embraced *Dred Scott*, "he is blowing out the moral lights around us." People of good will might rightly fear that 1.5 million abortions a year, whether the practice is guaranteed by the highest court or the highest legislature, is no less a darkening of the human spirit.

TRUTH & ITS CONSEQUENCES

The unflinching report of the UN Commission on war crimes in El Salvador, "From Madness to Hope," was the word El Salvador dreaded to hear but had to. It thoroughly detailed what human rights groups had known and said for years: the atrocities in Salvador's twelve-year-long civil war were committed by both sides, but the vast majority were perpetrated by the Salvadoran military and aligned right-wing death squads. Moreover, the violence was well-planned and systematic throughout the course of the war. The nation cannot heal its wounds unless it honestly addresses its past, restructures the officer corps, and establishes an independent judiciary.

The UN report's aftershocks were sudden and intense. The conservative press in Salvador dubbed the UN commission the "Lie Commission." President Alfredo Cristiani and his rightist-dominated National Assembly rejected the commission's specific recommendations to delay an amnesty and passed one immediately; as a result, the convicted murderers of the Jesuits were set free. Cristiani stalled a further purge of the military. And the head of the Supreme Court, refusing to comply with UN recommendations to step down, said only God could remove him from office.

The UN commission, however, got a better hearing from the Salvadoran church, from opposition political leaders, and from the international community. San Salvador's Archbishop Rivera Damas called the report a "historic document" and criticized the government's amnesty as a "desperate measure." Ruben Zamora of the opposition Convergencia party agreed and predicted the amnesty would only further divide the country. In Washington, the Clinton administration froze military assistance to El Salvador until reform of the army is implemented.

A truth commission is also needed in Washington. The U.S. provided $6 billion in economic and military aid to El Salvador during the war. According to Congressman Robert G. Torcelli (D-N.J.), it is now clear that the Reagan administration misled Congress to win funding, and that it was aware the Salvadoran military was "engaged in a widespread campaign of terror." Torcelli plans to review all relevant testimony from the period and to press for contempt proceedings if called for. Congressman Joseph Moakley (D-Mass.) plans to review the Bush administration's handling of the investigation into the 1989 murders at the Jesuit University. The UN report named top Salvadoran mil-

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itary officers responsible for the crime, the same officials who consistently stonewalled the administration and led it by the nose. Was the administration willfully blind or worse? In 1990, a congressional commission headed by Moakley specifically called for the reform of the Salvadoran justice system. Those recommendations were not heeded. Substantive aid to the Cristiani government should be contingent upon reform of *both* the military and the judiciary.

The UN report documents what has long been charged. It was U.S.-trained Salvadoran officers who perpetrated most of the war's most notorious acts: Nineteen of the twenty-seven officers implicated in the murders of the Jesuits were trained by the U.S.; the late Roberto d' Aubuisson, charged with the 1980 assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, studied at the International Police Academy, a Washington institution later shut down by Congress for teaching torture techniques; of the five officers cited for the 1980 murder of four U.S. church women, three were trained in the U.S.; and of the twelve officers accused of responsibility for the 1981 Mazote massacre, eight graduated from the U.S. Army School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia. Last year that school—whose graduates include Manuel Noriega, Leopoldi Galtieri (who led Argentina into the Falkland War), and Joseph-Michel François (a key player in the overthrow of Haiti's Aristide government)—had a budget of $4.2 million and trained 2,000 Central and Latin American soldiers. What is the Army running at Fort Benning, a school for thugs and war criminals? Shut it down.

The only way the Cristiani government will fully implement the UN-sponsored peace accord and the recommendations of the truth commission—the only way Salvador will turn from "madness to hope"—is for Washington to make it clear that there is no alternative.

HEALTH CARE PRIORITIES

AN OPEN LETTER

FOUR THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Dear Hillary,

Greetings. You and the colleagues you are working with are now very close to your May deadline for presenting a health-care reform proposal. By now, patients, providers, policy analysts, pundits, insurance executives, and others have given you earfuls about the numerous problems with the current system (increasing costs and decreasing access); the many malefactors (bureaucratic insurers, gouging pharmaceutical manufacturers, greedy physicians, overdemanding patients, meddling governments...); and the numerous solutions (single-payer or Canadian-style; managed competition; pay-or-play; etc.).

As you sort through these stories and proposals, attempting to paste together a comprehensive proposal, please admit another voice to the din. I ask you to consider the following four principles for health-care reform. They come from my experience with providers and patients as a manager for a staff model health maintenance organization (yes, I am administrative overhead). Take them as criteria to evaluate proposals. They won't tell you how to handle the messy business of how to reform the current system or explain how to extract compromises from aggressively entrenched interests. But you have to know what you want before you can decide what you can give away.

1. Gotta have it. Some level of health care should be considered a fundamental material right for all U.S. citizens. Like food, clothing, education, and shelter, a full and healthy life is a necessary precondition for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We are one of the very few industrialized societies that does not provide this guarantee. Fifteen percent of our population lack any sort of insurance against excessive health costs; millions more are poorly insured. We pay for this negligence constantly—in sick kids who can't learn, in acutely ill patients with preventable conditions, and in an impoverished social spirit. Ensuring universal access must be the primary priority of any reform.

2. Can't have it all. Health care is a commodity. Because our resources are limited, provision and financing are inextricably linked. We have ignored this to our peril, willfully denying the resource implications of the use of any health-care treatments—from diagnostic technologies to pharmaceuticals to surgeries. The results—medical-care prices rising more than twice as fast as the general inflation rate; total health-care expenses of over $3,600 per person in the U.S.; and poorer public health measures than virtually any other industrialized country.

Waste and fraud contribute to these costs, but the crux of the problem lies elsewhere, in the simple truth that we can *do* more than we can *afford*. It follows that in the best and fairest of systems, everybody cannot have everything. As a society this is easier to ignore then to address. It means some parts of health care must be considered nonessential—wants, not needs; the equivalents of a good wine, a good watch, an Ivy League education, or a guest bedroom.

Good health care reform must foster the recognition that our resources to pay for health care are limited. It must—as Oregon's Medicaid waiver experiment, Canada's limits on specialty care training programs, and Great Britain's prohibition of certain procedures on certain patients all attempt to do—allocate care in publicly accountable ways.

3. Keep it simple. How can any part of health care be considered a want and not a need? Health-care services in the U.S. are structured to proliferate needs—the fear of a missed diagnosis and the hope of a miracle cure are powerful trump cards that continuously raise the ante of health care.

Even ignoring these emotionally laden topics, health care in the U.S. is marked by excessive complexity. A funny thing happened to our archetypal family doctor—he specialized in obstetrics and gynecology, joined a physicians' group, hired a

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billing service, bought a share in an imaging center down the street, and took out loads of malpractice insurance. Institutional health care, however, remains about the experience of human frailty and weakness, and the fear, pain, and uncertainty it brings. It is about the encounter with compassionate, skilled personnel who want to help and heal. All else is dross. And there is plenty of dross—from tests of questionable value to rampant subspecialization to Byzantine payment systems that often create transparent incentives for physicians to over-treat patients.

In my work, I have decoded creative billing practices where services are broken into increasingly smaller units with invented prices. Our response is no more virtuous: hire more staff to query patients and providers, rebundle services, reattach our own invented prices, and rebill other insurers who might also be responsible. The cats and mice play on while the patient waits for attention.

Fears of missed diagnoses and hopes of cures notwithstanding, utilization of laboratory, imaging, pharmaceutical, and subspecialty services in the U.S. remain a function of their availability: supply drives demand. Any health-care reform must steer patients and providers alike toward preventative and primary care and away from subspecialization. Reform must also wean us from our collective addiction to high-priced diagnostic technologies of limited marginal value, by limiting their growth, development, and distribution if necessary. It must eliminate perverse incentives by ceasing to pay providers on a piece-work basis and letting health-care professionals do what their vocation calls them to do—care and cure.

A second constellation of perceived needs involves life-threatening or potentially life-threatening conditions. As Dwight Eisenhower warned us about military technology, we can do more with medicine than we know how to handle ethically or spiritually. Medical science's ability to keep the body going corresponds with our culturally conditioned desire to control the terms and conditions of our life. What need could be greater than the one to stay alive? But death happens, no matter how much we want medical care to help us hide from it or dictate the terms.

The expenses associated with bypass operations on seventy-five-year-old patients or nursing home care for ventilator-dependent car accident victims are only the most obvious costs associated with the refusal to accept the end of life. More insidious are the psychic costs—inflamed fears of dying alone, before one's time, or hooked up to machines. Our collective expectations have changed—in many ways we no longer have a health-care system but a sick-cure system. Health-care reform must foster an acceptance of the limits to our lives and our choices—by reimbursing for hospice care and eliminating incentives to perform or seek intensive levels of treatment as patients grow older. Health care has much more important things to offer than the false hope of immortality.

4. Keep it in the community. Another funny thing happened when the internist who replaced our old general practitioner started referring us for all these tests and then sent us to more specialists, all of whom billed our insurance companies. We felt less like a patient with a doctor, and more like a diagnosis and an insurance-form clerk. Insurance companies reacted in kind—creating smaller pools of healthier patients, leaving the residual sick to pay higher premiums.

Clinically, patients and providers alike often forsake the collective art of caring for the individualized science of curing. Administratively, we have lost the sense of health care as a public good—where healthy people subsidize sick people and wealthy subsidize poor. Reforms must emphasize the collective nature of health care: in public health initiatives that allow the sick and the healthy, the poor and the wealthy to participate with equal freedom and access.

A central question remains to be addressed in any health-care reform: how much inequity in the distribution of health care can we tolerate as a society? The current disparity is significant, costly, and unjust. When we can guarantee only needs, can some get all they want?

Health care deals with what we hold sacred—human life and spirit—in fundamentally different ways from other material concerns (food, clothing, housing). The injustice of the mansion next to the ghetto is dwarfed by the prospect of an uninsured mother with the poor prenatal care giving birth to a child four-weeks premature while, several floors below in the same hospital, an endocrinologist is evaluating a boy for synthetic growth hormones to improve his self-esteem. Let the wealthy pay for their tummy-tucks and young people receive more aggressive treatment than the elderly for similar conditions, but at some point our collective health suffers when our individual care varies.

I am optimistic that good reform can reclaim some of the desperately needed social and public characteristics of health care while forsaking little of the individual freedom and none of the technical competence we value in the current system.

Of course, the details of any health-care reform will by definition be sticky, arcane, and, hopefully, completely satisfactory to nobody. Courageous reformers will, however, maintain principles such as the ones offered here as guidelines for their work.

CHRISTOPHER F. KOLLER

Christopher F. Koller lives in Buffalo, New York, where he works for a health-maintenance organization.

REPORT FROM THE PROJECTS

PUBLIC HOUSING CAN WORK

SMALL IS BETTER

The level of crime and violence in Chicago's public housing projects is an ongoing scandal, and Chicagoans are desperately seeking answers. Many people wonder if boarding up and ultimately tearing down the high rises is the only solution. Currently, massive police sweeps of the projects are being implemented by the Chicago Housing Authority. Unfortunately,

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sweeps of the projects do not provide permanent answers. At Rockwell Gardens, a principal target of the "sweep" efforts, murders and crimes continue. Criminals in general continue to treat the projects as "the greatest permanent floating crap game in town." Short of turning the projects into veritable police states, police action can have only limited effect. So why not admit defeat and just tear down the high rises? Or why not sell the buildings to the tenants? Many facts militate against these proposals.

As a professional who has spent most of his adult life working with public housing in Chicago, I'd like to offer some more constructive suggestions. Closing down the high rises would only exacerbate the present housing shortage.

More important, however, is the fact that the high rises are not themselves the villains, as Philip Klutznick, a former director of the department of Housing and Urban Development and a leading real estate developer in Chicago, has pointed out. More than fifty privately operated high-rise developments in Chicago currently provide satisfactory living arrangements for many low- and moderate-income families on a subsidized basis and do not have problems comparable to those in the Housing Authority projects. This is also true in New York, Toronto, and in London. With the right mixture of tenants the projects can still work.

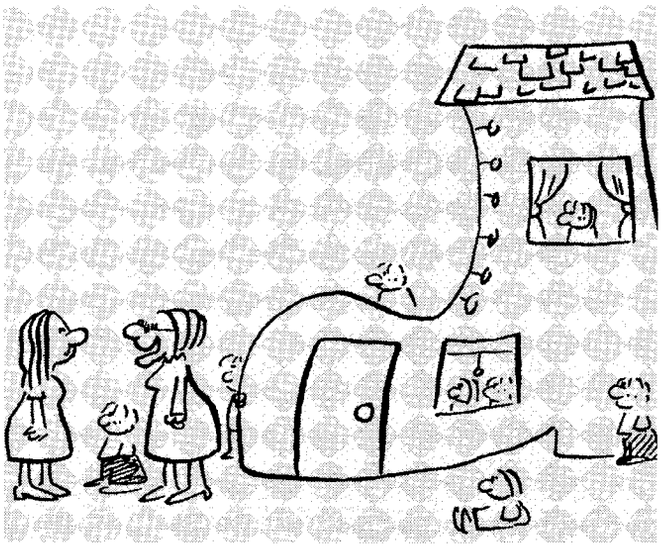
Should tenants become owners? Perhaps—if they really want to. Of course, during President George Bush's administration HUD Secretary Jack Kemp advocated the conversion of municipal projects to tenant ownership and/or management. HUD made a number of forays into tenant ownership, and accompanied all these experiments with many millions of dollars in rehabilitation money. They have been, to quote Sam Goldwyn, "colossal in a small way." Nevertheless, there is no groundswell of demand for such conversion among tenants themselves, especially not from those in the massive high rises. The reluctance of welfare and low-income tenants to embrace Kemp's "empowerment" schemes mirrors the experience of Britain, where for many years Margaret Thatcher's government tried to push home ownership in council housing. For a variety of reasons, poor tenants just don't bite. However, a huge demand for real tenant participation in management decisions does exist, and can be used by imaginative housing managers to dramatically improve the living conditions of their tenants.

What then needs to be done is no mystery. First, the present public housing must be emptied of seriously disruptive tenants. That means that those guilty of pervasive housekeeping problems, antisocial actions, or drug-related activities must go. This has been a rallying cry for many tenants for years, but the courts, the government, and the media as well as the civil rights organizations have presented intractable obstacles to carrying out this common-sense policy. Admittedly, sorting out families who are "untreatable" or "unreconstructable" is no easy task. But some control over who lives in the buildings is crucial if the housing authorities are to provide decent and safe shelter for the bulk of low- and moderate-income families.

Second, most of the problems seem to lie in the high rises. These problems, however, lie more in the size of the units and in the selection of tenants than in the high-rise buildings themselves. In Chicago, the public high rises have an inordinate proportion of three-, four-, and five-bedroom apartments serving female-headed families with many children. It is worth noting that private landlords have recognized for years that in both market-rate high-rise buildings and in their subsidized housing only a very small portion, say 10 to 15 percent, should be three-bedroom or larger units. This suggests that while the present public high rises, with their huge number of multiroom apartments, do not have to be torn down, they do need to be rehabilitated into smaller apartments for smaller families. This is imperative if the units are not to be vacated and vandalized.

Leaders of public housing, such as Vincent Lane, chairman of CHA, and Sally Pinero Hernandez, New York City Housing Authority chairman, insist that low- and moderate-income projects cannot be the housing of last resort for the poor. Instead, each building should house only a limited number of multiproblem families, while the rest of the units are filled with more acceptable tenants as well as tenants from other socioeconomic groups. In Chicago some lake front sites of about 300 units have been rehabilitated under Vincent Lane. Welfare clients are mixed in with a much larger population of low- and moderate-income working families. Only a heterogeneous population can create the kind of social atmosphere that deters crime and disorder.

Perhaps even more shameful than filling the projects with multiproblem families has been the treatment accorded to the homeless. Instead of acting to provide appropriate housing for them, such as single-room occupancy "hotels," HUD has insisted on placing the homeless in vacant public housing units. This, of course, adds large numbers of unstable and troubled people to already fragile communities. Placing the "homeless" in existing public housing will only intensify the plight of the projects, and such actions routinely call forth loud protests from already besieged tenants.



"It's all mine free and clear now—the giant died in a beanstalk accident."

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In my opinion, subsidized housing is the best solution to the larger housing problem. Some public housing will always be needed, but rental housing operated by private real estate firms is the proven way to go. Government subsidy programs like the "236" program or the "221D 3," both of which were initiated in the sixties, are still capable of providing exemplary housing. Section 8 housing, under which rental developments are operated with 80 percent market rate tenants and 20 percent subsidized tenants, is another proven winner. It is also true, however, that these privately built government-subsidized developments have been used as unnecessarily large tax shelters. In any revitalized program such tax shelters should be reduced, and the current provisions for the return of the buildings to the private market after twenty years should be changed.

Admittedly, this does leave open the vital question of what to do with large families, who all over the world seem to constitute the greatest problems for public housing. A substantial proportion of these families, it seems to me, could be handled in a home-ownership program of single-family units similar to a successful Federal Housing Administration "235" program which operated from 1968-73. True, a number of these units had to be foreclosed because of the abuses of real estate firms, mortgage bankers, and the FHA. Still, some 400,000 single-family homes were built or made available to low- and moderate-income families through this initiative. At this time, many single-family or two-family houses can be obtained from FHA foreclosed or other tax foreclosed properties and can be rehabilitated.

In cities like Chicago and New York there is a vast amount of deteriorated housing—some vacant and some not—that is readily available for conversion. Acquisition must be done in the public interest and at reasonable prices. This should cost the taxpayers less than half of what new public housing costs today. Still, substantial amounts of federal, and perhaps state and city, funds will be required to adequately house America's poor. If the problems of our inner cities are to find any sort of solution, however, such an allocation of funds is necessary.

J.S. FUERST

J.S. Fuerst teaches social work at Loyola University of Chicago.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Liz Leibold McCloskey

PLUSH LAWNS

HERE COMES THE BABY

In the first six months after our son Brian was born people would ask how he had changed our lives. And he had—emotionally, he really was a concrete expression of the love Peter, my husband, and I have for one another; practically, no other topic was as remotely interesting as our little bald and smiling man. Still I was intent on telling all who asked that our life had not changed all that much. We could still go out to dinner and just tote the little guy along; we still went skiing; we still invited friends over for barbecues; we still talked about health policy and worked hard on Capitol Hill. But even as I went on enumerating all the ways in which we had not changed, I sensed we had been lulled into a false sense of stability. Now, eighteen months later and another little one on the way, I know what people were getting at. Kids not only change your life, they change your understanding of life.

First of all, lawns. You want them green. You want them plush. You probably want them self-contained. In short, you want them.

Second, time off. You want it, but you don't really get it. One weekend evening with most of our extended family gathered at my parents' ski house, including six children under the age of four, my brother-in-law plopped in a chair exhausted. "Working every night until eight is more relaxing than this," he announced to an appreciative audience.

Third, mundane events: they are packed with meaning and excitement. Going to the Division of Motor Vehicles for a driver's license is an incredibly exciting adventure viewed through the eyes of a toddler. That annoying cat on our front porch turns out to be a gift from heaven occupying Brian for extended periods of time. Running down to my sister's house (three doors away) to borrow a cup of milk elicits squeals of delight from Brian, who gets to see his cousins for the third time that day and who isn't afraid to appreciate them.

And then there's Sunday Mass. It has become a truly community celebration. No longer can Peter and I sit anonymously in our pew if Brian is going to repeat the tune to "This Old Man," and run up and down the aisle. At last we understand that being a worshiping body means being engaged with one another and being happy, even jubilant about that.

Brian has even stirred my interest in our local community. Yes! to the public school bond issue. Yes! to full funding for WETA, our local public TV station. Yes! to slow and cautious drivers on our dead-end street. I even joined the neighborhood community association as the recording secretary (which has proven a seriously misguided way to channel this community spirit).

On to national issues. I feel even more strongly than before that prenatal care and preventive pediatric care should be included in any national minimum health benefit package. Hillary please note! I am sure that my second-thoughts on fetal tissue transplantation research (*Commonweal*, March 26) grew out of my awe at seeing Brian developing into a real person. My perspective on emerging reproductive technologies, and the not-too-distant gene therapy and manipulation techniques, cannot be divorced from my experiences of pregnancy and parenthood.

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Now that I am with child again, I have been thinking more and more about what it means to be a cocreator of human life with God. What I am learning is that there is a peace in accepting those things we cannot control. It would be an understatement to say that the first six month of this pregnancy have been stressful. In addition to the usual strains of pregnancy, Brian, at twelve months of age, had to undergo fairly major corrective surgery on his foot. He wore a cast for two months and now must wear a "special shoe" twenty-four hours a day. A week after surgery, he came down with a bright red rash that covered him from head to toe. It was diagnosed as Fifth Disease, which can cause a miscarriage if a pregnant woman is exposed. While one blood test showed that I had not been infected, the nurse told me that another showed I was at risk for having a baby with Down's syndrome. I was urged to have an amniocentesis. I was also told that amniocentesis carries a slight risk of causing a miscarriage. So I could choose to wonder whether or not the baby had Down's or possibly cause a miscarriage through my curiosity. I decided to continue to wonder.

So, as much as I am an integral player in nurturing this life within me, I share the role not only with Peter, but ultimately with God. What I have learned about being a cocreator is that I must do whatever I can in my power to ensure that this baby gets proper nutrition, that I get plenty of rest, that my belly gets rubbed and kissed by little Brian, but that after a certain point, the outcome of this pregnancy is out of my hands. It also means that we must do whatever we can to ensure a just and good world, but that we are limited by our very physical rootedness in these bodies, and on this earth.

As Lent came to a close and we prepared to celebrate Easter, I thought about God's choice to become human. By doing so, God dignified our role as cocreators and taught us, among other things, that "greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13; *see* Patricia Houch Sprinkle, *In God's Image: Reflections for the New Mother*, C.R. Gibson, Co.). I already know that loving Brian at times means laying down the *New York Times*, laying down the phone, and lying down on the floor to play and be tackled. Now this new child has deepened my appreciation for that Easter message: I must lay down my fears, my desire to control, my questions, and my uncertainty for the love of my child. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

LET THEM EAT CAKE

A LOVE LETTER TO MULTICULTURALISTS

Among the folks who call themselves multiculturalists, there are three varieties, the playful, the grave, and an intermediate type, the pseudo-grave.

The playful multiculturalists (PMs) are those who like to utter the rhetoric of multiculturalism while not really believing it. Using this rhetoric puts them in a position where nobody who really matters can trump them morally, while allowing them to pull moral rank on everyone else. Their actual feeling is that a little bit of cultural diversity is great fun, at the same time trusting that everyone has enough good sense not to carry things to extremes.

Their patron saint, the patron of all those who play with fire, is Marie Antoinette, who, with her friends, would occasionally milk a cow while pretending to be a peasant woman. Poor Marie! She never intended of course that everyone should really be equal; that the distinction of the orders should be abolished; that aristocracy and royalty should be done away with. She was only playing. Peasants and shepherds were cute and lovable, to be sure, at least when seen through the eyes of François Boucher. But in the last analysis, peasants were peasants and aristocrats aristocrats, and never the twain should meet. Bent playfully under the cow, Marie would have been shocked to think that others would eventually become deadly serious about the game she was engaged in, even to the point of cutting off a few heads (including, alas, Marie's own), the better to guarantee that there would be no essential distinction in the world between peasants and queens.

The grave multiculturalists (GMs) are those prepared to go all the way. Their patron saint, the patron of all who pursue abstract principles to their logical conclusion, even when that conclusion is insane, is Maximilien Robespierre. Robespierre was a bright, serious, well-intentioned young man with a remarkable capacity for sinking his teeth into the fashionable wisdom of his age and not letting go. If he became one of history's great serial killers, it was not because of a sadistic bent in his character. It was because he had a clear head; he saw better than others that one who says A must say B; he understood what was entailed by the adoption of a certain theory of republican freedom and virtue.

The PMs are at heart monoculturalists who get great pleasure out of talking the multiculturalist game. To be fair to them, they are not totally disingenuous about this. Themselves masters of mainstream culture, they know how to have fun on weekends with cultural diversity, making brief excursions into the subcultural fringe. How drab life would be if it contained nothing but Wall Street, computers, and the *New York Times*. Thank God for Mexican restaurants, Cajun music, and Colombian cocaine.

But the GMs, who are not socially so well situated as the better-educated and higher-income PMs, do not recognize this distinction between the mainstream and the fringe; or if they do recognize it, it is only to turn it on its head—placing diversity at the heart of things, while permitting a degree of uniformity on superficial matters. Unlike the PMs, but very

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much like Saint Robespierre, they have no lightness of touch, no sense of humor. They are terribly in earnest. They are a new edition of the terrible simplifiers Burckhardt warned us about. If for the PMs multiculturalism is a game, for the GMs it is a religion.

To complete the typology, let us note the intermediate variety: the pseudo-GMs, who are PMs that imagine they are GMs. These people live under the illusion that they are prepared to go all the way with multiculturalism, but only because they have no clear idea what "going all the way" really means. We may confidently predict that they will recoil in horror once they understand. Their patron saint is the chaplain in Shaw's *Saint Joan*, who was very eager to have Joan put to death until he actually witnessed the burning, only then realizing its horrendous nature; whereupon he repented of his fiery, punitive zeal and reformed his life; leading another character to remark, "Must then a Christ perish in torment in every age to save those that have no imagination?"

All three varieties have adopted the ideology of multiculturalism, which proclaims that the more cultural diversity American society has, the better. But this proposition is lunacy. If you want to see cultural diversity run rampant, look at the former Yugoslavia. Look at the Serbs and the Croats and the Muslims. There is multiculturalism for you, pressed down and running over.

"No, no," I shall be told. "You don't understand. When we talk about multiculturalism, we mean cultural diversity accompanied by tolerance. Mere diversity all by itself isn't the point. And diversity accompanied by intolerance is exactly the opposite of what we have in mind. The trouble in Yugoslavia is not too much multiculturalism but too little. If only the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims would accept our ideology (as you call it), they could live in peace together."

This sounds a bit like saying that if only everyone were honest, then we could do away with locks and police officers; or if wishes were horses, then beggars would ride. Such assertions are true but meaningless. The question is, how do we create conditions that will make it possible—better still, probable—that culturally diverse groups can live in peace within a single society?

There is room in America for a certain amount of cultural diversity, as the entire history of the United States demonstrates. This nation has had a plentiful supply of diversity based on religion, region, education, social class, race, ethnicity, age, and a few other factors. But at the same time we have had an immense amount of consensus: common language, common political theory, common spirit of business enterprise, common work ethic, common idea of education, common forms of recreation and entertainment, even something approaching a vague common religion (what Robert Bellah calls the American "civil religion"). The diversity has been possible only because the consensus has been so powerful. In fact this strong cultural consensus has made diversity not merely endurable but notably beneficial in many respects.

Yet if we heed the siren call of the radical multiculturalists and decide to push for cultural diversity on a whole-hog basis, we'll have to dismantle this broad cultural consensus. And of course once we dismantle it, peaceful diversity will have become impossible, for the culturally diverse among us will have no common ground on which to stand.

For a society to live in peace with itself, for its members to be able to cooperate with one another in a productive fashion, its agreements have to be of primary importance, while its disagreements are of only secondary importance. And these agreements have to be of a more positive content than a mere agreement to disagree; that is, we have to agree on something more than mere tolerance for diversity. This need for consensus is, or at least should be, the most obvious of sociological truths. Yet this obvious truth is being ignored today in America. It is being ignored not only by the GMs, those Robespierres of multiculturalism; it is being ignored too by a lot of people who should know better, including many present-day Marie Antoinettes, who (if I may mix, or rather churn, metaphors) are milking cows while American culture burns. □

The viciousness of the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is almost impossible to imagine. Since fighting began in 1991, hundreds of thousands of people — many of them innocent women and children — have been traumatized by the horrors of "ethnic cleansing." Millions more are now homeless and in desperate need of aid.

Catholic Relief Services can't stop the fighting. But we are administering life-saving assistance to the victims of war. Right now, CRS is operating throughout the Balkan states — including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia — providing emergency food, blankets, medicine and more. And you can help — ***your support of CRS will save lives!***

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NEW LIGHT UNDER THE OLD BUSHEL

STEVEN ENGLUND

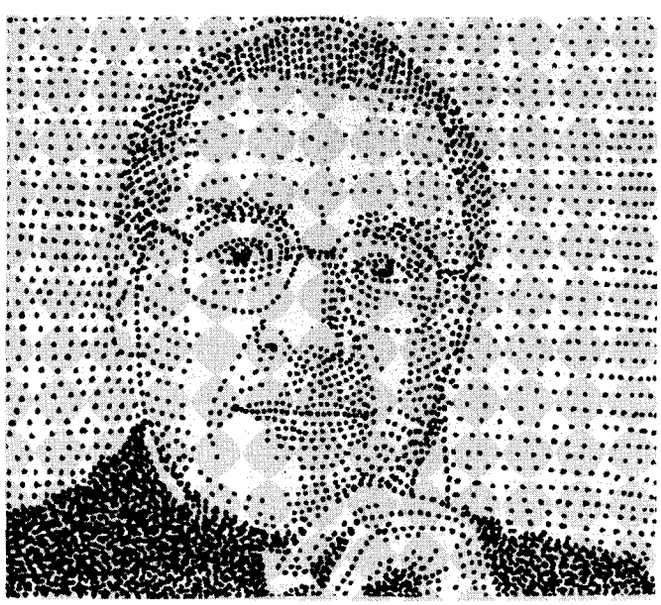
WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE FRENCH CHURCH?

"The only thing that could unite, or ever has united, us Europeans," Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, the archbishop of Paris, recently told a rapt audience of scholars and intellectuals at New York University, "is not our language or culture but our common history in Christianity." One knows what Lustiger means: there was a time, around the ninth century, when Europe (well, Western Europe) was united, sort of, in the Roman church. Still, one is more impressed with how ***dis***united Catholic Europe has been (let alone Christian, or Christian/Jewish/Moslem/ unbelieving Europe), is now, or perhaps ever more shall be. France's own "common history" in Catholicism has proven far from unifying, as even the last few years have shown. "The [French Catholic] clergy has been irresponsible in following too blindly the devices of the society of our time and not being true to their apartness," Lustiger told the NYU meeting. He may have a point—the clergy has certainly been hoist on the petard of "relevance." Then again, "apartness" carries its own risks. The French church has recently conjured with both demons.

Famous for its clergy-baiters, France has also known her clergy-manipulators. In 1943, a young man from Chambéry named Paul Touvier was named to an important post in the paramilitary French militia. This unit was a semi-Fascist Pretorian Guard that reported directly to Vichy premier (and archcollaborator), Pierre Laval. Under the command of Joseph Darnand, soon to be Vichy minister of order, the *Milice* amounted to a French counterpart to the German SS, whose protection and sympathy it enjoyed. It filled crucial and distasteful political functions, systematically employing torture, denunciation, and assassination on French citizens. The organization's aim was to turn Vichy from a merely authoritarian into a totalitarian state, which would stand side by side with the Reich in the new Nazi Europe. In his capacity as head of "information" for the militia throughout the entire Rhone Valley, Touvier participated directly in crimes and repression, including ordering (and probably personally assisting in carrying out) the execution of resisters as well as of Jews.

After liberation, Touvier fled justice, narrowly escaping trial and hanging for his role during the war. Though he would always have important sympathizers in government (notably in the interior ministry, which controls the police), Touvier's principal protectors and allies were Catholic clerics: monks, priests, abbots, bishops, mothers-superior, men in parochial, diocesan, national, and international office, all gave him asylum and succor. Catholic Aid, the French equivalent of Catholic Charities, paid him a monthly stipend until 1989. For a brief time the Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel stood by him. Undoubtedly Touvier's greatest paladin, who "literally adopted Paul Touvier and his family," was Msgr. Charles Duquaire, secretary to Cardinal Jean Villot, Vatican secretary of state (1969-79), who successfully rallied the unusually cautious Villot to campaign for a presidential pardon for Touvier.

This grace proved slow in arriving. Charles De Gaulle stubbornly believed Touvier deserved no better than "twelve bullets in the ass." But De Gaulle's successor, Georges Pompidou, hoping to stanch disaffection among liberal Catholic voters by recovering conservative ones, signed the pardon in 1971. Pompidou's action proved bittersweet for Touvier and his sup-



STEVEN ENGLUND *is a free-lance writer who specializes in French history and culture. He lives in Waupaca, Wisconsin.*

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porters, who had hardly broken out the champagne before public indignation (2,000 articles in under six months) engulfed their celebration. The Touvier matter became an "affair" that has lasted till now, one that has unquestionably tarnished the image of the French church.

In an effort to cleanse the church, and possibly to further loosen it from any antimodernist and pro-Vichy associations, in 1991, Cardinal Albert Decourtray, the remarkable archbishop of Lyon, took Lustiger's advice and assembled a group of specialists in French wartime history, led by the distinguished scholar and lay Catholic, René Rémond. Decourtray gave them free run of the archdiocesan archives and instructed them that "Truth, whatever the cost...is preferable to rumor. I continue to believe that a well-documented and publicized wrong, admitted in truth and courage, is preferable to suspect innocence."

Le Monde called Decourtray's initiative "unique in contemporary French history." The commission's report, published last year as *Paul Touvier et l'église* (Fayard), is reasonably well done. Contributors complained of having too little time to research and write their respective sections, let alone integrate them harmoniously, and believe that this has prevented the volume from achieving the kind of lasting academic merit they and the cardinal had wished for it. The report's best feature is its unflinching portrait of Touvier: a man who remains to this day (at age seventy-eight) unrepentant for his wartime actions, who has never sought anything less than complete vindication, and who has demonstrated an uncanny knack for engaging clerics in his cause. The report is clear: Touvier was no mere felon on the lam but a consummate artist of the clerical confidence game.

The volume is marred, however, by a tone of self-congratulation and a tendency to employ apologetic arguments. It won't do, for example, to put the wartime militia's deeply held anti-Semitism on the same footing with its late bouts of anticlericalism (it threatened a few unsympathetic bishops), and then to stigmatize both as "improperly Catholic." (In other eras, they certainly were regarded as "proper" by a host of Catholics, in and out of Roman collars.) Equally annoying is the report's ostentatious grapplings with the question of clerical motive: "the true mystery lies in puzzling out the reasons why a man, whom nothing recommended for church benevolence, who in no way made the church his debtor, could so easily and enduringly, win the trust and active sympathy of numerous ecclesiastics from a wide variety of religious institutions and orders....engaging on his behalf their reputations and compromising the church's good name.... We confess that we have not completely plumbed the secret [of why]."

While it is true, as the report claims, that some of the aid proffered Touvier (mainly of a basic human sort: shelter, food, etc.) surprisingly sprang from clergy active in the resistance, the great brunt of active collaboration and solidarity came from conservatives who, in virtually all instances, were out of sympathy with prevalent forms of French republicanism. It is thus disingenuous for the report to try to explain away the political content of actions of certain clerics by calling them "dolorist and apolitical" or by saying that in them "devoutness replaced intelligence." It was not simply "mistrust of politics or naiveté" that led Msgrs. Julien Gouet or Duquaire to abet a Touvier, of staunch right-wing Catholic past and family, and not a Communist or an anticlerical republican on the lam. The fragility of French Catholics' democratic education, as of their commitment to the Republic, were familiar political realities in pre-1945 France. "Apolitical dolorism" may well be, and often was, an effective form of politics.

While much has changed since then, the specter of Vichy still has the capacity to torment the French. When, last spring, Touvier appeared before a court to learn if he would be tried for crimes against humanity, the three judges quashed the case on the wholly questionable grounds that the state Touvier served (Vichy) was not, technically, a totalitarian regime nor did it systematically persecute people for religious, racial, or political reasons. *Vraiment*? Jews, Communists, and sundry resisters might demur. The case has been appealed and may be revised.

Meanwhile, a new embarrassment to the French bishops has arisen with the publication last month of a book by Msgr. Charles Molette, archivist of the *Église de France*. The work is a study of the wartime "martyrs" of the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (French citizens shipped off to forced labor in German World War II factories) whose Catholic faith led them to underground activism and sabotage inside Germany. Molette produces some disturbing evidence to show that the largely pro-Vichy French episcopacy gave little or no sympathy or support to STO Catholic activists.

While most Frenchmen, including Catholics, would probably not be surprised by Molette's findings nor wish to see Touvier escape conviction, the problem of Vichy no longer preoccupies the *Église de France* as it once did. Catholicism in France has come a ways since Villot wrote Pompidou on Touvier's behalf. The Vatican II "revolution," though being rolled back in many areas, has changed French Catholicism once and for all. The French episcopal conference today freely denounces causes like Le Pen's while taking a radical stand on such hot social issues as immigration. (The French clergy is even further ahead of its flock on many questions than the American bishops are ahead of theirs.) This said, John Paul II's neoconservatism has unquestionably made itself felt in France, as everywhere else. The traditions, sodalities, and individuals that are lumpable under the rubric "Catholic Action"—meaning church immersion in the world, epitomized by the worker-priest movement—are still present but are no longer the defining force of the French church (not least because too many priests of the 1960s, the so-called "lost generation," have left the cloth).

Center stage in France has, for some time now, been hosting a highly visible spiritual rebirth. Words like "repentance," "continuing conversion," "spiritual formation," "evangelization," and "charismatic renewal" describe the new emphasis. Strongly backed by France's leading cardinals, Decourtray in Lyon and

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Lustiger in Paris, the benefits of this sort of renewal include a slight upswing in Mass attendance and vocations (Lustiger ordained twenty last year, a bumper crop), and a quite spectacular groundswell in degree and vitality of lay involvement in church life at all levels. There are many examples of this, but perhaps the most "*médiatique*" [media-attracting] has been the resurrection of France's youth movement, in part a response to a direct appeal from Pope John Paul. Colorful pilgrimages to St. Jacques de Compostelle, Chartres, and elsewhere have stunned the bishops for their youthful zeal and magnitude.

There is a growing sense in many French Catholics that certain familiar and demoralizing statistics (e.g., Mass attendance below 3 percent in numerous dioceses; deaths exceeding ordinations to the point that in thirty years there will be 8,000 priests in a country where there are now 25,000, etc.), don't reflect the reality, which is that a "greened" French Catholicism is alive and well. Nor have outsiders failed to see the new light under the old bushel. A lay associate of Cardinal Lustiger's said recently, "Lapsed Catholics and nonbelievers are no longer so hostile or suspicious. On the contrary, they seem to be saying to the church, 'We're genuinely interested in your message. Don't disappoint us; be good. Live up to your words. We might follow.'"

Undeniably, the inimitable archbishop of Paris stands at the center of this renewal, though he is the first to give the credit to Lyon. (Decourtray's misfortune is to be of the same generation as Lustiger; in any other era, he would be France's leading churchman.) These days, however, Lustiger is away a lot. I doubt this is so because he is more uncritically appreciated abroad than at home, though that is true; rather, his role in the international arena has increased steadily over the decade. Lustiger continues to stand in the small handful of the pope's closest cardinal-advisors, in which capacity he takes important parts both on and off stage—e.g., the decision to remove the Carmel from Auschwitz or his role in the newly organized colloquy of Western European bishops. (Perhaps because of derisive criticism, Lustiger and the pope no longer speak of "Europe" in the faintly medieval terms of *respublica christiana*; the conference is now more like an informal club whose main purpose seems to be to make its members aware of the problems and opportunities of Eastern Europe.) There is a strong likelihood that Lustiger could have been named Vatican secretary of state a year or so ago, but he turned it down for several reasons: his work in Paris is still *in medias res*; he's a lousy administrator, and knows it; and, above all, he would find a curial job too removed from human contact. ("He'd never get used to saying private Masses," said his priest-secretary.) In short, Lustiger is coming to know himself, his strengths and his limitations. None among the former is greater nor potentially more significant than the sort of prophetic witness he gave recently as Chubb Lecturer at Yale.

In a speech titled "Let My People Go," this convert who still considers (and occasionally calls) himself a Jew, talked about the Judaism he finds implicit in Christianity, and vice versa. The address was a kind of contranationalist tract for our time, studded with erudite references, in which Lustiger made one of the strongest statements yet offered by a churchman of his rank on the topic of the Jewish-Christian relationship. Analyzing what he sees as the universal—not the familiarly tribal—core of biblical Judaism, Lustiger argued that the supposedly singular story of the Jews' continuing reemergence from bondage lies at the heart of that other great biblical faith, Christianity. Where the "good news" is proclaimed, the Jew is present. Anti-Semitism for the Christian is thus a form of self-hatred. As a coda, Lustiger noted that the Jewish story is present in "the lot of the black Africans in the New World." "In a way, by becoming Christians, [African-Americans] considered themselves as *Bene Israel*, children of Israel. And this may be why American Jews and African-Americans have had so much in common for so long."

Crucial as Cardinal Lustiger's ideas are for setting the course of the French church, he is not the only pilot on the bridge. Peter Hebblethwaite was right when he singled out the vision of the Jesuit, Paul Valadier, to be one of the most searching and interesting theologies in the contemporary world. While more profoundly conciliar in his optimistic take on church and society than the cardinal, Valadier is an extremely subtle man whose thinking is wonderfully unpredictable. His latest ideas do not permit the facile and provocative contrasts with Lustiger's which the French press sometimes like to draw. (The cardinal, for his part, continues to deny taking any role in Valadier's ouster, some years ago, from the editorship of *Études*.) Clearly, Valadier approves some of the archbishop of Paris's stands, including perhaps Lustiger's recent reassertions of the church's right to sit in judgment of government and its actions. In his latest work, *Lettres à un chrétien impatient* (La Découverte, 1992)—a book urgently deserving of translation into English—Valadier produces a strikingly original rereading of the "Syllabus of Errors." Arguing that Pope Pius IX in some regards foresaw and, as it were, foredenounced the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century, Valadier writes that "when the church rises up against the limitless pretentions of the state, it is not necessarily because it aims in its turn to lay hands on the state in a totalitarian manner, but rather to show that an authentic state, true to its real nature, must accept not to be everything." Consider, he quietly concludes, our justified outrage when the church loses its courage to judge the state (e.g., Pius XII on the Jews).

More may be said about the strange meeting ground of these two highly learned, so-*French* clerics. Lustiger, the antimodernist prophet, shares with Valadier, the postmodernist intellectual, a mutual critique of modernism. This latter theory—fashionable in Parisian circles since the publication of Marcel Gauchet's *Désenchantement du monde* (1986)—holds that Christianity has emancipated the world from any need for religion, including itself. Valadier makes mincemeat of Gauchet, systematically demonstrating in two long "letters" how the faith of Christ is far more at home in contemporary, pluralist, consumerist, secularized society than it ever was in the mercifully departed days of "decoratively Christian society" (Maritain's phrase) which Gauchet takes as the norm. "If, on the contrary," the Jesuit writes,

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"one agrees to look closely and with goodwill at the values and principles that structure our contemporary world, he will see that they furnish the bases for a Christian renewal," even as that very renewal will prove critical and transformative of those values and principles. On Valadier's reading, pluralist society stands "more than ever in need of minorities of conviction" (Maritain called them, "*minorités de choc prophétiques*") to criticize its idolatries and mythologies.

Where Lustiger and Valadier differ profoundly is in their orientation to the world and the church's role in it. In the last analysis, the cardinal cleaves to a pessimistic and rather old-fashioned notion of church-against-the-world, while the Jesuit evinces great confidence in the gospel's continuing pertinence and strength as leaven in secular society. Valadier mistrusts a Catholicism that "seeks to project its identity and specificity in a marginalism raised to a proper characteristic." The church, he argues, is neither self-sufficient nor, still less, a perfect society. It should not therefore see itself as a countersociety, measuring its success according to how well it manages to "disqualify the world" or to envelop society and government, as in Carolingian times. Both projects, on Valadier's reading, lead to "questionable, to say the least," developments.

Reviewing the Touvier matter and the recent spiritual renewal in French Catholicism in light of the above, one may say that whether or not the Rémond volume succeeds in distancing the church from the ghost of Vichy—and I would say on the whole it does—the mentality that permeates the book nevertheless to a large extent remains the apologetic one of us-against-them that is so reminiscent of pre-1945 French Catholicism. It is a stance and a temperament one also finds alive and well in some (by no means all) of the evangelizing and spirit-raising initiatives going on in France today. Valadier writes of the latter that many are legitimate "sites of spiritual invigoration [*ressourcement*]," but that others not only show signs of gnosticism and antisocial illuminism, they also fall politically close to Lefebvre-style integrism, and to that extent risk recreating the old dualism and antimodernism which have served the church so badly. The charismatic element, he adds, often leads to religion as a show, as football, with its own stars and stadiums. It appears modern, it imitates modernity in certain regards, but at bottom it sets itself up as a rival to the modernity that it hates and mistrusts. As such, it is unbiblical.

Notwithstanding this caveat, I would repeat in closing the words with which I closed an earlier profile of Cardinal Lustiger (*Commonweal*, April 25, 1986): for a Catholic, Paris (and indeed France in general) is an exciting spiritual place to be. □

CLINTON'S NEW POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

RENEWING THE LANGUAGE OF EQUALITY

WILSON CAREY McWILLIAMS

In last fall's election, most Americans allowed themselves to be drawn by hope, but they went wistfully, driven by worries and without much confidence, convinced that they had more things to fear than fear itself.

Change was in the air: for the first time in more than half a century, a presidential election was not framed by war, present or rumored; voters were restless; new concerns and constituencies made themselves felt and the victorious Democrats proclaimed themselves a "new" party. Yet no election has so often or so pervasively been compared to the American past: Americans wanted assurance of comparability if not continuity, looking for old landmarks and fixed stars in the strange new world they confronted. In 1992, confidence did not point Americans to the future, it drew them to the past, and the election, a vote for change, was also a hope for renewal.

The clearest message of 1992 was the majority's demand for active government, engaged to relieve America's discontents and reclaim the future. Even in 1988, opinion had tended to side with the candidate who, on any given issue, supported the use of public power. This time, the tide was unmistakable: 61 percent voted for the differing, but undeniably activistic persuasions of Bill Clinton and Ross Perot. It was a hard year for *laissez-faire*. Rhetorically, the high point of the Democratic campaign was Mario Cuomo's attack on Bush for relying on "the invisible hand of some cyclical economic god" to save the ship of state. Even conservatives, of course, now accept a considerable degree of economic intervention: Ronald Reagan promised a "safety net," the Reagan and Bush administrations committed billions to protect depositors in failing banks and savings and loans, and the administration took it for granted

WILSON CAREY MCWILLIAMS, *a frequent* Commonweal *contributor, teaches political science at Rutgers University. This article is adapted from* The Election of 1992: Reports and Interpretations, *which also includes essays by Gerald M. Pomper, F. Christopher Arterton, Ross K. Baker, Walter Dean Burnham, Kathleen A. Frankovic, and Marjorie Randon Hersey.* *Copyright © 1993 by Chatham House Publishers.*

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that the Federal Reserve should manage interest rates to promote growth.

In 1992, the current of activism ran even stronger. Among economists, there was something of a generational shift, reminiscent of the advent of Keynes. Clinton found no shortage of economists willing to agree, for example, that government is needed to promote saving and investment, especially since Reagan's version of supply-side economics had proved misplaced. By itself, moreover, investment may not be enough: counter to much conventional wisdom, there is good evidence that American productivity is not low; the problem may be that relative efficiency is being purchased at the price of employment, so that government is needed to link investment, productivity, and work.

Although Americans turned to government in 1992, they still distrusted it and were apt to despise politics; a year earlier, Peter Hart and Douglas Bailey found that, although voters "desperately want to believe in government," they were deeply disillusioned, so that there was a "dangerously broad gulf between the governors and the governed." Clinton's great challenge, and the republic's, lies in the need to strengthen the dignity of citizenship and the quality of democratic consent. Knowing this, Clinton seems to be pursuing something approximating a permanent campaign, but the media, a part of his intended solution, may be an even bigger part of the political problem.

In contemporary America the dominant forms of the press are media by which information is communicated to us, but without any serious element of reciprocity or accountability. We depend on the media and recognize their power, but our dependence is a mark of voicelessness and indignity. Today's media reach us in private settings and address largely private concerns and feelings, relying on images more than words. Where radio, as Russell Baker remembers, "intoxicated us with voices," the contemporary media discount speech, continuing the grand modern impulse, initiated by Machiavelli, to exalt the visible and nonverbal, the deed as opposed to the word. To the extent that they are treated by the media at all, political speech and deliberation are presented as a kind of theater of deception, in which content matters only as clue to covert forces and schemes.

In 1992, American resentment of the media turned explosive, so that suddenly the campaign was dominated by "new" news—"weird media," Bush said—the talk shows and tabloids, Don Imus and Arsenio Hall, Larry King and the "informercial." Ross Perot was the first to see the advantages of the new vehicles; Clinton, damaged by the more orthodox media, soon followed.

The "new" media have undeniable benefits: they are apt to be free and they allow candidates to develop positions in-depth, or at-length, at any rate. Clinton turned to them in some relief: after a frustrating, much-trivialized primary in New York, Clinton sought to use his victory speech to direct public attention to the substance of his campaign. But after four minutes, all the networks except for CNN and C-Span stopped their coverage, and CNN dropped out after nine minutes. Network news reduced the speech to soundbites, and the next morning, on the "Today" show, Clinton's remarks had been reduced to "I love Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Kansas, and I really love New York."

The talk shows, by contrast, allowed Clinton to display his virtuosity and command of the issues. The new media, moreover, worked to diminish the advantage the party in power draws from its ability to dominate TV news, and Republicans can be expected to cultivate them in force in 1996. For viewers, what mattered in the "new news" was face-to-face interaction with hosts and with audiences, or hearing candidates field call-in questions, an approximation, even if weak, of town-meeting democracy. But as Harvard's Ellen Hume observes, "the media are our new political bosses—the direct filter that parties used to be." The media audience cannot hold its studio "representatives" accountable, nor can the individuals who make up the "community" of questioners speak to one another without the assistance of the media themselves. The "electronic town hall," Gerald Marzorati wrote, is what passes for civic community when people live among strangers and the "friendliest colleagues are the computer, database, and the fax." The new media, in sum, did not renew American citizenship, although they may have made citizenship seem interesting; as political columnist David Broder noted earlier in the campaign, they offered only the "catharsis" of "highly contrived dramas."

The candidacy of Ross Perot epitomized many of the themes of 1992, but it would have been impossible without the media. On their battlefield, Perot proved a master strategist. Week by week, he spent more money purchasing time for his interrupted campaign than any previous candidate. Perot showed that with grand salesmanship and enough money it is possible to become a major force without passing through the primaries or the parties, and—dodging the press where he could not dominate it—he avoided almost all of the scrutiny that goes with a traditional campaign. Of course, even Perot couldn't entirely sidestep the old modes, and Perot the candidate repeatedly undermined Perot the strategist, revealing too much of his testy, autocratic, and paranoid streak.

Recognition that ending the deficit would call for taxes and for sacrifice of a high order helped persuade Perot to quit the race. When he returned, he retained the image of "can do" forcefulness, now combined with a "message" that—vague in so many details—was presented as complete and tied to Perot's person. The common thread of Perot's two campaigns was his demand for quick solutions and his unwillingness to do the prolonged work of persuasion and compromise within institutions. Hostility to institutions, in fact, was a major part of his appeal. In May, the great majority of Bush and Clinton supporters, while critical of Congress generally, approved the job being done by their own House members, but 55 percent of those supporting Perot disapproved. That unhappiness fit neatly with Perot's discounting of representative government and his disdain for conflicts of interest and party, the messy charms of democratic politics. The instinct of the

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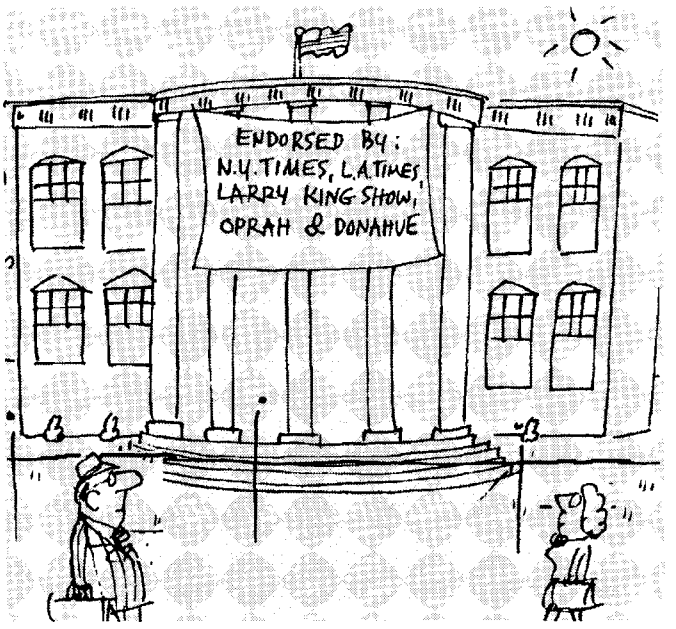
entrepreneur, Michael Schrage observed, is the desire to create new forms, and hence to reject established institutions, and Perot had the special attraction of an "outsider" who was knowledgeable about the system, one who did not offer to dismantle government but promised to make it stronger and more effective. In addition, the nationalization of his antiforeign themes amounted to a pledge to restore the American imperium as a part of America's inheritance.

Repeatedly, Perot's campaign was linked to the "tradition of prairie populism," but the stark differences between his movement and the old populism illustrate the difficulties of contemporary democratic life. The Populists of 1892 grew out of and were composed of a dense forest of membership groups and face-to-face communities, so that the People's Party was a federation of localities and associations, held close to the grass roots. The party abounded in policies, many spelled out in detailed plans: the Sub-Treasury system, free silver, the graduated income tax, the government ownership of railroads, telegraph and telephone were only the most prominent.

By contrast, Perot's movement was constructed from the top down, its organization at least inspired and certainly sustained by Perot's money. It offered few policies; only the deficit-reduction program, the centerpiece of the second campaign, had much solidity. Above all, Perot's movement was centered on and defined by its candidate. Even Perot's version of the "electronic town hall," George Will pointed out, involved citizens giving information to the leader, not discussing or making decisions among themselves—an image, Will thought, shaped by the mystique of leadership with which Woodrow Wilson had invested the presidency.

"I'm doing this for the American people," Perot often declared, "because they can't do it for themselves." Just so: whatever the legacy of Perot's candidacy, it pointed to our distance from Populism's promise and to the endangered status of democratic citizenship.

Clinton's victory, I think, hinted at broader possibilities for redefining the Democratic coalition. On election night, Al Gore asserted that the election demonstrated the "end of sectionalism," and in a sense, it did confirm sectionalism's long decline. But Clinton's Southerness still made him seem alien to many Northern audiences, and even Gore's argument pointed to the special sectional character of the Democratic ticket. As the nomination of two border states, it was not unprecedented: rather, it turned away from Michael Dukakis's effort to recreate the successful Kennedy-Johnson, Boston-Austin axis of 1960 toward an earlier success, the Truman-Barkley ticket of 1948. But unlike those predecessors, Clinton and Gore came from states that were members of the Confederacy: the 1992 nominations were a strong symbolic gesture to the South, part of a successful effort to dent that now-Republican bastion.



The geography of the election was suggestive in another way. Sweeping the Northeast and the West Coast, Clinton and Gore also were almost universally successful in the broad, Middle American region that Meredith Nicholson once called the "Valley of Democracy." Except for Mississippi, Clinton carried every state bordering on the Mississippi River, and every state on the Ohio except Indiana, equaling Lyndon Johnson (who took Indiana but lost Louisiana). Only on the upper Missouri did Clinton's pluralities disappear.

Our stereotypes associate the two areas with the Democratic party's fundamental *agon*. We think of the coasts—somewhat unjustly, of course—as the homeland of liberals and neoliberals, a diverse grouping uniting partisans of high-tech industry and the cultural elite, mostly internationalists disposed toward free trade, almost all secular and inclined to relativism, people who defend policies in the idiom of rights. Middle America, by contrast, symbolizes the middle sectors who "do the work, raise the kids, and pay the bills," the people to whom Clinton offered himself as champion and who probably gave him his margin of victory. For all their variety, these Middle Americans are often tied to place and apt to be religious, not often moralists (at least, not those who voted for Clinton), but concerned with decency and justice—with families and safe communities and fair taxes—at least as much as they care about rights. And less confident about international politics, they include many unashamed patriots who sympathize with protection.

The nagging problem of guiding principles was exemplified in the debate over "family values." When they responded to Vice-President Dan Quayle's attacks, Russell Baker observed, liberals too often sounded "as though they're against love, marriage, and family."

Clinton avoided that ideological trap. He defused a good deal of the Republican appeal to "family values" by observing that—apart from restrictions on abortion and on gays—it was largely talk. And in his soft way, he was just as clear about the defects of liberalism: "Family values alone won't feed a hungry child, and material security can't provide a moral compass. We must have both." Yet Clinton's shrewd claiming of the sensible middle ground left his family policy vague, and even three months into the Clinton administration much is yet to be defined.

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As a campaigner, Clinton kept his coalition pretty much together, but the presidency is a harder test. More or less united against Bush and the Reagan legacy, Democrats are more apt to squabble when the question is what they are for. Even during the campaign, many of Clinton's Middle-American supporters were bothered by the exclusion of Robert Casey, Pennsylvania's anti-abortion governor, from a convention rostrum which had been opened to prochoice Republican women. It was an example of the abiding fear of Middle-American Democrats that liberals will be more at ease in the corridors of power and that, in the Clinton administration, the "new" Democratic party will be swallowed by the "old."

It does not help that some items high on the liberal agenda, including many aspects of abortion and gay rights, can be achieved fairly easily by executive order, while the hopes of Middle Americans call for structural solutions, a long process of legislation, and considerable pain.

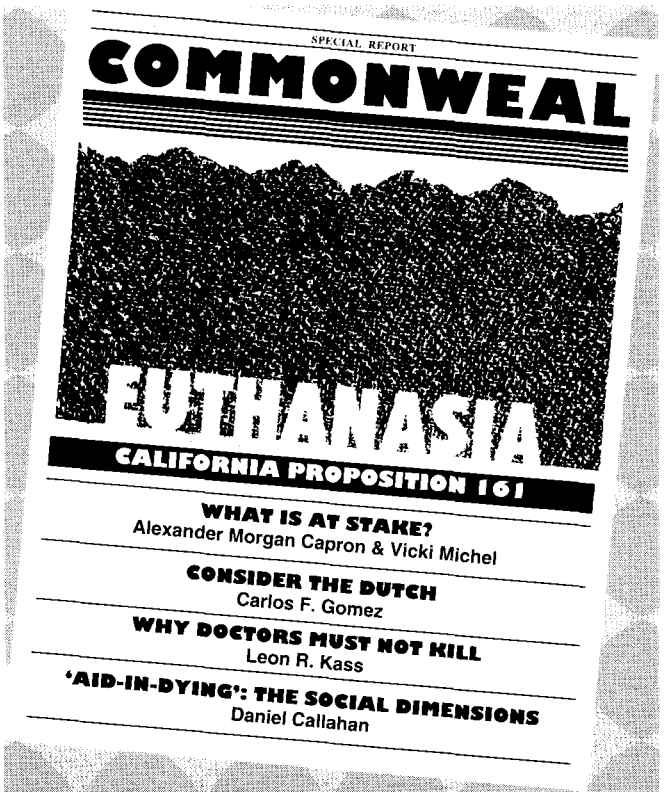
Judged by the campaign, Clinton can be expected to attend to such feelings and to the demand that burdens be shared fairly. His February State of the Union address gave ample attention to both concerns. But sacrifice calls for more than a gift for conciliation and the brokering of interests. It demands a scale of justice and the conviction that our dignities and destinies are bound up with the common good.

Clinton's first months as president show every sign of a concern to strengthen the government's title to rule and its claims on our allegiance. If he is wise, he will promote the use of public policy to rebuild the links between citizens and their government, not simply media gimmicks, but local governments, parties, and associations with the "power of meeting," where citizens can learn the habits of democracy and the arts of politics.

Yet ultimately, both in relation to his party and the country as a whole, Clinton's success will depend on his ability to articulate measures of public purpose and policy. For a Democrat, equality is the enduring grail, and in his best moments, Clinton's rhetoric of citizenship points to equality's vital contemporary meanings. Civic equality is no prescription for uniformity, not even in the form of enforced diversity: as Barbara Jordan told the Democratic Convention, equality and equal rights are the conditions of civil variety. For Americans, their differing faiths and cultures are sources of strength, but no one needs to be told, these days, that cultures are not always easily compatible with each other or with democratic politics, that cultures often include racism and sexism, or that some nurture a hunger for dominion or are otherwise at odds with democratic life.

America's version of multiculturalism accepts diversity, but only on the understanding that all cultures yield any claim to rule that runs counter to equality and equal rights. From an egalitarian point of view, cultures are not "separate realities," but more or less adequate answers to the human problem, to which equality and the rights that go with it are qualitatively superior because, unlike stories and legends, they rest on the stark truth of human nature.

Clinton's excellent campaign slogan, "Putting People First,"



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also hints at broader meanings, just as the reconciliation with nature to which Al Gore calls America implies more than a relation to the nonhuman environment. From its Columbian beginnings, America has been caught up in the modern quest for the mastery of nature, the rejection of whatever humans have not chosen or made. It becomes ever clearer, however, that technological mastery subordinates us to the things we have made and, left to itself, tends to dispense with human craft and devotion. Yet the United States also began by asserting the proposition that both our equality and our rights are things that we did not make and about which we have no choice, an unalienable heritage from nature. If people are to come first in public policy, human nature must be given its due. Human beings are more than consumers and their dignity—their need to be needed—must be afforded at least equal status with the pursuit of abundance and mastery.

Equality implies more than rights: it suggests that, within the limits of our circumstances, we can and should be held accountable to equal standards, offered and expected to live up to the opportunity to contribute to the common life. For Americans, Bill Clinton's promise of a "new covenant" and a "new direction" sounded chords of memory. It remains to be seen how far he can take Americans toward a rediscovery of the republic. □

Stephen Stepanchev

A Minor Resurrection

I broke my right arm in a high wind
In Jamaica. It picked me up and flung
Me down on a stone pavement. The bone
Cracked, the muscles frayed. I howled.

The orthopedist jiggled the bone
As I lay nerveless on valium.
The wall was a dizzying egg-shell white;
A shadow clung to a crucifix.

Under a sleepless window, swallowing
The sky's clouds, airplanes, birds,
I lie in a green bed like a grave.
A magnolia drops petals on the lawn.

I imagine sweeping the pain away
In a minor resurrection, when, like
The magnolia, I blossom all at once
In branches of pink bloom, and only
Later put out my simple green leaves.

SCREEN

RESCUE OPERATIONS

'PASSION FISH' & 'MAD DOG'

John Sayles's *Passion Fish* is the sort of movie I want to call a masterpiece. It proffers the revelations of character rather than the surprises of plot, yet its story never meanders. It is humanistic and compassionate. There is a nice balance between scenes that unfold mainly through dialogue and others told more visually. The camera is always in the right place and held there for the right length of time. The beauty of the setting—the bayous of rural Louisiana—is gloriously exploited yet never overwhelms the dialogue or actors.

And the actors are marvelous. In a role that might tempt another actress to pull out all the stops, Mary McDonnell is refreshingly astringent as May Alice, a successful soap opera actress rendered paraplegic by a car accident, who retires in disgust to her large, deserted ancestral house in Louisiana. Alfre Woodard, as May Alice's nurse, Chantel, matches McDonnell in precision and tacit power. I know of few other films in which so much emotion is communicated by two actresses simply looking at each other with the camera shifting viewpoints at just the right moments.

The theme of *Passion Fish* resides in that interchange. Chantel snaps May Alice out of her depression not just through professional competence but by inadvertently revealing her own painful needs. Nurse and patient heal each other by giving each other a future.

There is much else to praise (a perfect supporting cast, pungent dialogue, the elegant shape of each sequence) and I really wanted, *still* want, to love this movie. Why then do I merely like *Passion Fish* and why do my fingers refuse to type superlatives? Moreover, why, having been gripped by the film's first half, did I feel my attention wander in the second, and why did I even feel the first stirrings of boredom?

There is only one thing wrong with *Passion Fish*, but it is a grave deficiency. The film runs on rails to its predestined conclusion and those rails become all too visible in its final hour. Once it becomes clear that Chantel simply must keep her job with May Alice in order to win back custody of her daughter (which she lost temporarily because of a criminal episode involving drugs), and once we see that May Alice has become too attached to Chantel to leave her behind in order to renew her television career in New York City (where, for reasons I won't get into, Chantel can't accompany her), we know just how the film must end. It's a little too pat. And Sayles makes it all the more pat by satirizing, in the scene of May Alice's reunion with her former soap opera co-stars, the emotional brittleness of actors and the triviality of much of their work. By the time we are through laughing at the performers, we may feel that May Alice really isn't giving up all that much after all

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when she renounces an actor's life. But with her sacrifice thus devalued, the drama of her ultimate choice is lessened.

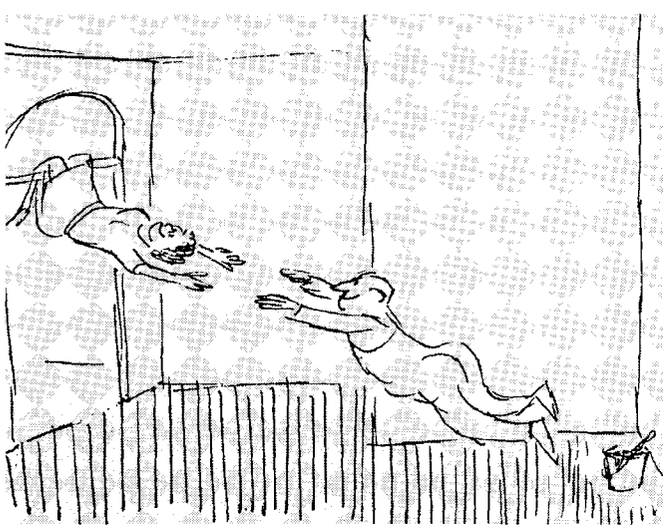
You can see what *Passion Fish* lacks if you compare it to a film it rather resembles in plot: *Tender Mercies*. Both films have show-biz protagonists who are forced to drop out of the fast-track lane, and who become emotionally involved with loving and needy people in rural locations. Unexpected opportunities to make comebacks then threaten to terminate their new, more modest lives. But by the time Mac Sledge, the country western singer played by Robert Duvall, must make his decision, you can't tell in which direction he will turn, and *only in retrospect* can it be seen that the choice he makes is inevitable in light of his developing character. And though the filmmakers, Horton Foote and Bruce Beresford, show the tawdry side of show business, they also strongly convey its true excitement and glamour. Consequently, we know that Mac will be making a real sacrifice whether he stays with or leaves his new, rural family. And that sense of impending sacrifice helps give *Tender Mercies* a dramatic excitement that *Passion Fish* lacks.

Nevertheless, the skill of this film's execution (especially its acting) almost mitigates the tameness of its conception. I recommend that you see it. But bring a little patience with you.

I don't highly recommend *Mad Dog and Glory*, I merely love it. In this movie, trashiness and artfulness so meet and mingle that it's difficult to tell where one leaves off and the other begins.

While watching, I kept shaking my head at the whole retrograde project (a milquetoast spends two hours of reel time summoning up the courage to whip a bully for the sake of a pretty girl!) yet I couldn't take my eyes off the screen. The film succeeds at a very low level through a combination of filmmaking savvy and the curious knack of its makers for diluting their own juvenile modern skepticism about the compatibility of the sexes, and a very unmodern willingness to suspend that skepticism during flights of sheer romantic lyricism.

Like *Passion Fish*, *Mad Dog* is an account of a rescue operation in which the rescuer desperately needs the succor of the rescued. Wayne, a police photographer sarcastically nicknamed "Mad Dog" by his cop buddies because of his seemingly unshakable mildness, saves the life of a well-connected criminal named Frank who then promises to be for his savior "the expeditor of your dreams." Into Wayne's apartment and celibate existence walks "Glory," a beautiful would-be actress who has fallen into the gangster's clutches and is now on loan to Wayne for a week. Love, threats, and violence ensue in ways I needn't describe because you can now figure out the rest of the story for yourself with perfect accuracy. Yes, *Mad Dog* runs on rails, too, but unlike the ones in the Sayles film, these rails are rarely visible while you watch the movie. And even when they are, the moviemakers keep shaking the passenger cars so violently that you never get a chance to look down at the track.



The script is by Richard Price who is, like Sayles, a novelist. But whereas Sayles tries to give his films some of the expansiveness and depth of a long novel, Price seems to be bringing only a veteran movie buff's sensibility to his work. And this buff must have seen a lot of B movies. For if *Mad Dog*, at its worst, has a B movie's tinniness, it also has a good B movie's speed, fluidity, modesty of scale, and unexpected grace notes in the basically stock characterizations. And director John McNaughton (whose first release, *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* was, indeed, a latter-day B picture) gives every scene a present-tense vividness that, fortunately, leaves us little time to think about what we're seeing. But McNaughton can't redeem Price's worst conceptions, including a climactic fist fight in which the hero, after getting beaten to a pulp, suddenly jumps up to thrash the villain. At its core *Mad Dog and Glory* is a boy's movie.

The acting helps immensely. Mike Starr makes the cliché he plays—lovable, strong-arm moron out of Damon Runyon—bearable and, yes, rather lovable. Bill Murray, helped a lot by a makeup and hair style that give the very shape of his skull a brutal appearance, is surprisingly scary as Frank and it's a scariness that abides even during Murray's comic moments. Uma Thurman as Glory achieves the first complete characterization I've seen from her. She uses nervousness as a mask, as a way of making Glory mysterious as well as sexy.

For Robert De Niro's performance, I will try to go light on the superlatives. This is his best performance since...well, it's his best, most committed performance in a long time. Trying to calm a crazed killer during a convenience store robbery, Wayne cautiously opens the cash register and urges the psycho to take the money and flee. De Niro keeps his body and head very still for this moment and allows only his outstretched hand to tremble. In that contrast of motionless and tremor, De Niro makes us feel both Wayne's terror and the fundamental courage of the man who feels that terror. There's not a moment in this performance that doesn't convey the same richness of counterpoint.

Now this is what I call a bad week on the job: an admirable film that I can't love and a silly movie that I can't shake. But, after all, strange things happen to the mind in the darkness of movie theaters.

RICHARD ALLEVA

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TEMPORAL BUT TIMELESS

DAUMIER AT THE MET

Revolutions, whether in politics or in taste, never begin in the countryside. Fraught with revolution, the history of modern times is largely the history of the modern city. The greatest visual urban poet is Honoré Daumier (1808-79) whose career in Paris, the crucible of politics and taste in the nineteenth century, spanned several upheavals in government and in fashion. Of course, Daumier is mostly renowned for the nearly 4,000, largely political, lithographic caricatures he made for two weekly newspapers on and off to the end of his life, starting in 1832. However, he also created numerous drawings in chalk, charcoal, conté crayon, and watercolor that captured the small motions of daily Parisian existence as they continued to revolve through the whirl of momentous events. The current exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, on through May 2, contains over 100 of these rarely seen works, along with a handful of Daumier's finest political caricatures and several beautiful paintings in oil.

Some of the most moving and enigmatic works in the show are the series of drawings Daumier made on the subject of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. To sort out their perplexing quality is to get a deeper understanding of what Daumier's art is all about. The theme was a popular one among romantics like Gustave Doré (1833-83), whose famous series of illustrations for Cervantes's novel are probably the best known images of the attenuated knight and his pudgy squire. Unlike writers and artists in the eighteenth century, who saw the Don as an example of madness at war with reason, nineteenth-century figures like Doré imagined a marginalized idealist heroically set against the dull recalcitrance of practical life. The curators of this show follow that romantic lead in the wall texts and the catalogue, writing that for Daumier, the Don symbolizes "the search for an ennobling existence." Daumier identified his efforts to be taken seriously as an artist, they go on to say, with Quixote's quest to fulfill the chivalric ideal.

No doubt Daumier identified with Quixote on some level, as he did with the street performers who populate his work beginning in the 1850s. In some pictures Quixote's lance resembles a pen and his shield a palette; a newspaper caricature from 1867 makes the connection between the artist and the eccentric outsider explicit. It's true, too, that Daumier wished ardently to be considered a painter as well as a caricaturist but that he never attained that kind of esteem. Artists, though, have a way of drawing from their lives without being personal. The Norwegian novelist Knut Hamsun called creatively engaged detachment an "unselfish inwardness." We are accustomed to thinking of art works—as well as people's opinions, insights, and observations—as "projections" of a person's particular condition. When the curators explain Daumier's depictions of Quixote as reflections of his psychology, they reflect a very contemporary notion of projection. Alongside that idea, their interpretation of the Quixote pictures as expressing "the search for an ennobling existence" seems like a mechanical nod in the direction of an artistic distance the curators don't really believe in.

In 1863, several years before Daumier began his Quixote series, Baudelaire published his famous essay, "The Painter of Modern Life." In it the poet gave the definition of beauty a modern cast, a dual Cartesian nature. "Beauty," he wrote, "is made up of an eternal, invariable element...and of a relative, circumstantial element, which will be, if you like, whether severally or all at once, the age, its fashions, its morals, its emotions." The circumstantial element, thought Baudelaire, was what made each age modern in its own moment—"every old master has had his own modernity." To be modern and true, artists had to seize the flotsam and jetsam of present appearance; to be remembered, they had to "distill the eternal from the transitory."

A fixed sense of the eternal and a tenacious grasp of the transitory are the fundamental conditions of satire, and of Daumier's art especially. Whether he was thinking of Baudelaire's essay or not, Daumier transposed his friend's aesthetic formulation into moral terms in his Quixote series. Dogged and vigilant, riding a white steed, the gaunt, lance-bearing Quixote leads his corpulent sidekick, slouched forward on his donkey, through interminable space. In two drawings, there is a single tree, as in the set Giacommetti—his wiry figures influenced by Daumier—designed for the first performance of *Waiting for Godot*. In one painting in oil, the pair descend into a pale gold valley from shadowed heights, the sky stretched out beyond them in layers of gray, azure, and mauve. In the exhibition's final work, Daumier has rendered the pair in oil on wood as almost a complete abstraction. They struggle upward in essential toil, the twin elements of a primordial labor that is both spiritual and fleshly. Avid for an eternal dignity, the knight charges forward into emptiness; his squire follows behind, courageously bearing the transitory weight of stomach and bowels.

The two figures are the rudiments of Daumier's art, both his political satire and his social caricature. The wizened knight, far from symbolizing the artist's ambition, represents his ethical nature. A vivid idea of what human life should be, how human beings should live and be allowed to live, gives satire its meaning in a specific context. The ethical point of view is to the satirist's works what developing fluid is to a photographic print. Without it, the depredations of power—the gauntlet stomach and bowels run through history—are never exposed. Yet a satirist's ethics have to be as broad as the landscape Quixote journeys through. He or she is driven to excoriate a particular abuse only for the sake of accommodating the entire condition of being human. That general condition is what the social caricaturist "distills" into the culture-bound moments he or she captures to make them familiar to later times.

This exhibition contains powerful drawings of passengers on a train and travelers waiting on a bench, of lawyers and judges noble and corrupt, of emigrants in flight, of lovers kissing and

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children running, of the faces of ordinary people, of mythological, religious, and historical scenes. The timeless perspective of how people strive to live and the temporal perspective of how they do live—the Don and Sancho—radiates through all of them. It's tempting to say that Daumier was a great caricaturist because he lived through great events. If, as Baudelaire said, Daumier was like Molière in the way he rapidly cut to the core of a person's individuality, then French history at the time was the Comédie Française. Circumstance provided everyone with a role to play, and their parts and the various sets they played their parts against illuminated one another.

Daumier's career began roughly around the time of the July Revolution in 1830 when the last Bourbon ruler of France, Charles X, fled to England and Louis Philippe, the Duc d'Orléans, ascended to the throne. Placed in power by the Liberals, Louis Philippe administered the rule of the middle class. His venal minister, Guizot, believed poverty was the result of a moral deficiency in the poor, and by 1847 nearly a third of Parisian workers were either starving or subsisting on charity. Revolutionary Socialists drew up plans for utopian societies; liberal Socialists made a coalition with Republicans and elbowed out moderate, middle-class reformers; Bonapartists plotted to put Louis Napoleon, Napoleon's nephew, back on the throne. As they had since 1789, Parisians threw up barricades in the streets in 1848 and the Republicans and Socialists established the Second Republic. In 1852, however, Louis Napoleon executed a series of deft political maneuvers, returned to power, and had himself proclaimed Napoleon III. At first he curbed civil liberties, but at the same time he made his regime the most socially progressive France had known. Between 1867 and 1869 he restored freedom of the press and of assembly and the liberalization of the empire was complete. Just as important as these political metamorphoses, throughout Napoleon III's regime his prefect of the Seine, Baron Haussmann, destroyed the narrow, winding streets that had existed since the Middle Ages and replaced them with wide boulevards, partly to make it impossible for insurrectionists to throw up barricades. In terms of class formation, political structure, and physical appearance, Paris was in a state of perpetual transformation during all of Daumier's life.

All this is by way of a final remark on Daumier's studies of ordinary people. History and politics tremble in the air around them, yet though they are surrounded they are not engulfed. Friends drink together, fathers gently bathe their children in the Seine, workers look the viewer proudly in the eye. In one drawing a woman leads a child across a bridge, the two of them struggling against the wind. It is one of Daumier's finest political caricatures. The artist responsible for representing Louis Philippe—who thought of himself as a romantic adventurer—as a pear, caricatures history in this work as a windmill, not a giant. Though the strongest wind may send events spinning, it cannot stop the streaming generations of ordinary lives, quietly and decently lived. The most powerful political statement an artist can make is that private life extends beyond the reach of politics. For Daumier to have made it again and again is especially quixotic today. LEE SIEGEL

Lee Siegel, a frequent contributor to Commonweal, *is a freelance writer living in New York.*

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François Mauriac's 'Le cahier noir'

DAVID O'CONNELL

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of François Mauriac's *Black Notebook*, a little-known but essential essay by one of this century's greatest Catholic novelists, and one of the foremost political journalists of his day. Under the title *Le cahier noir* this short work was published in the dark days of 1943 by the clandestine Resistance publishing house Les Editions de Minuit (which after the war went on to fame and profit as the publishers of Samuel Beckett and several of the practitioners of the *nouveau roman*, most notably Alain Robbe-Grillet).

Since by 1943 the Gestapo considered Mauriac (1885-1970) one of its principal enemies among France's intellectual class, he used the pseudonym of Forez. The book hardly reached a wide audience in France, but after it was smuggled to London, where it was immediately translated by a young intelligence officer named Robert Speaight (who later became Mauriac's biographer), it took on a life of its own as one of the Allies' major propaganda essays. In the English speaking world, it offered religious and philosophical reasons for continuing the war. The essay also served as a useful corrective to those who might have been tempted to think that French Catholics had accepted the New Order in France.

Mauriac's shift from the Right to the Left in the late '30s is a paradigm of a larger transformation: the movement of the Catholic hierarchy and Catholics generally in democracies like France, Great Britain, and the United States, from political conservatism and philosophical pessimism to an alliance with the forces of internationalism and cosmopolitanism. In 1943 and 1944, while Charles De Gaulle was in London, Jacques Maritain in New York (as De Gaulle's unofficial ambassador), and Georges Bernanos in Rio, Mauriac remained in France.

> *Goethe in his old age, on the threshold of eternity, no longer wanted to think about the world of politics, or what he called a "disorder of error and violence." But the disorder we find ourselves in is our business; it concerns us and we will be cowards if we take the easy way out and succumb to indifference.*
>
> *Especially for Christians, indifference is impossible. The God that they serve, this God who has given them a heart capable of knowing him and loving him, hardly turned himself away from the bloody history of humanity, but on the contrary plunged himself into it. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us." So, far from having the right to flee from man by taking refuge in God, Christians are called upon to find God in men.*
>
> —François Mauriac
> *Le cahier noir*

Born into a wealthy Bordeaux family, Mauriac migrated to Paris in 1906, married a girl from his own social milieu in 1913 (and soon became a father of four), served despite ill health in the ambulance corps during World War I, and began to find his audience as a writer beginning with the novel *A Kiss for the Leper* (*Le baiser au lèpreux*) in 1922. Two other major novels of the '20s, *The Desert of Love* (*Le désert de l'amour*) in 1925 and *Thérèse Desqueyroux* in 1927, enabled him to attain before he was forty what the French hyperbolically call "*la gloire littéraire*." During the '20s, while his reputation was on the rise, Mauriac was also the subject of constant attacks by a combative priest with the improbable name of the Abbé Bethléem as well as by the editors of the still powerful Catholic daily newspaper, *La Croix*, run by the Assumptionists. They accused him of using the Catholic world of symbol and metaphor to glorify sin and sinners. When in 1927 the Abbé Jean Calvet published his study of the Catholic revival of the preceding fifty years, *Le renouveau catholique dans la littérature française*, he went out of his way to exclude Mauriac from his approved list of Catholic writers, claiming that Mauriac might indeed be a "Catholic who writes novels," but he was certainly not a "Catholic novelist."

At about this time, Mauriac underwent a spiritual crisis in which he seems to have recognized that criticism of this kind from his "*frères enemis*," was perhaps in part justified. He took to heart the words of advice given to him by his friend Maritain—that a Catholic novelist ought to "purify the source" of his inspiration before writing—and set about writing novels that would be more edifying. Among the several that he wrote along these lines in the '30s, was *Vipers' Tangle* (*Noeud de vipères*, 1933). This novel, along with Georges Bernanos's *Journal d'un curé de campagne* (*Diary of a Country Priest*, 1936), is one of the most important Catholic novels in twentieth-century French literature. It shows the workings of grace in the soul of its principal protagonist without his being aware of it, and has lost none of its bite over the years.

By 1933 Mauriac, still not yet fifty, was elected one of the forty "immortals" of the French Academy. The fact that as a journalist he was an *enfant terrible* of the political Right, did not hurt his candidacy. But then a funny thing happened. When

DAVID O'CONNELL *is professor of French and chair of the department at Georgia State University in Atlanta.*

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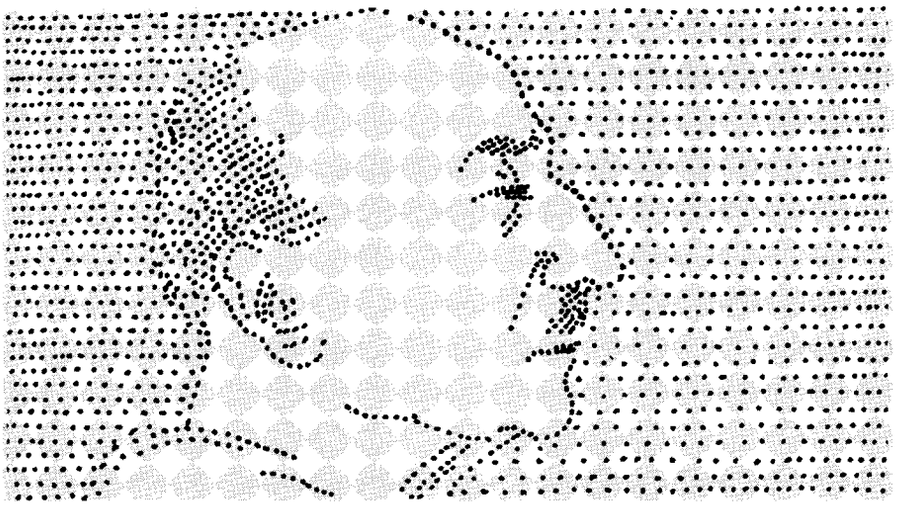
Mussolini invaded Ethiopia and Franco declared war on the Spanish Republic, Mauriac joined the voices of the Left in denouncing these events. Beginning around 1937, he also began to make his voice heard as an opponent of Hitler and in particular of Nazi racial laws. His outspoken support of Jews and Jewish causes dates from this time. The traditional Catholic Right was offended by all these positions and would never forgive Mauriac. But by 1939, as professor Jean Touzot of the Sorbonne has pointed out, Mauriac was the foremost political journalist in France precisely because of his independence. He said what he knew to be right and based his opinions unabashedly on gospel values. He apologized to no one.

When the war came in 1940, Mauriac watched and waited. The demarcation line between occupied and free French zones ran right through his property at Malagar (about fifty miles from Bordeaux) and by the fall of 1940 a German officer and his entourage were billeted on the second floor of his home. Mauriac and his wife, the four children and the maid, all moved to the ground floor where they would remain until 1944. In these conditions Mauriac wrote what some would call his greatest novel, *La pharisienne* (*Woman of the Pharisees*). It was published in Paris in 1941, sold 40,000 copies in three months, and was violently attacked by Drieu La Rochelle, the leading collaborationist intellectual. Ostensibly dealing with pre-Vatican II spirituality, the accumulation of merits through private devotions, and the manipulations of others for their own spiritual good, *La pharisienne* is Mauriac's most religious and most profound novel. But to many Frenchmen in the summer and fall of 1941, the book was read as a commentary on their condition, or as a *roman de l'occupation.* They saw the book as an allegory of their own political and social situation, in which they were now being forced to do penance for the sins of the Pharisees who had welcomed the abysmal defeat of the previous summer and who were now in control of the Vichy government. Mauriac's stature as a patriotic Frenchman reached a new height in this year, for readers marveled that he had been able to get a book like this through the barbed wire of Nazi censorship.



Now more and more, Mauriac had to keep a low profile, especially since his name was being regularly mentioned in French broadcasts on the BBC as one of those Frenchmen who represented the true spirit of France. It is against this background that *Le cahier noir* appeared in 1943. Written in the dark days of 1941 and tentatively titled "To a Man in Despair, So that He Will Regain Hope," this short essay marked Mauriac's complete passage from the Right and Center Right to the Center Left, and expressed a huge mental shift that was simultaneously taking place among French Catholics. From mid-1941 to 1943, as the resistance to German occupation grew, an unlikely alliance developed between two groups that had previously been enemies in France: traditional Catholics and Communists. This was symbolized by De Gaulle's flag: the traditional Republican and anticlerical French tricolor with a crucifix added, the so-called Cross of Lorraine.

Mauriac's essay states the case for committed, socially conscious Catholicism, which today represents the Catholic center in the Western democracies. France to him is still "a seamless garment" (he had invented this term in 1938 when referring to the place of Jews in French society and he continues the metaphor here). The Christian, he argues, cannot withdraw from politics and retreat in disgust into his own private world. He must fight on in the name of human values. Since God chose to assume human form through the Incarnation, the believing Christian, he argues, really has no choice in the matter.

He also lashes out at those Frenchmen who had been seduced by the philosophical pessimism of Nazi ideology and quotes Goethe and Grimm as kindred spirits. His quarrel is not with the German people but with the ideology that has temporarily taken over their nation. He argues that once you despise man, you can abuse individual human beings, treating them like animals, and he refers to the cattle car he had seen at Austerlitz Station transporting Jewish children out of the city one dark morning.

This essay and the patriotic conduct that went with it during the war made Mauriac's name a symbol of the Allied cause. When the first issue of *Le Figaro* appeared on August 25, 1944, the day on which Paris was liberated, Mauriac wrote the front-page essay on De Gaulle and his achievement, *Le premier des nôtres* ("The First among Us"). It has become a classic text for the French people. Later, during the cold war, when so many of his Communist allies from the Resistance years migrated to the Soviet side of the national debate, Mauriac would not follow them but opposed Marxism with the same virulence that he had displayed against Nazism. Tony Judt's recent study of this period, *Past Imperfect* (University of California Press), begins to restore to Mauriac the recognition that he deserves for his political positions during this period.

Although largely forgotten today, Mauriac's *Le cahier noir* deserves to be remembered. It reminds us of the personal courage displayed by one of the most important Catholic laymen of the twentieth century and symbolizes a major change in Catholic attitudes. □

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Pinch-hitting for God

METAPHYSICS AS A GUIDE TO MORALS
Iris Murdoch
The Penguin Press, $35, 520 pp.

Diogenes Allen

I recently saw a newspaper photograph of Iris Murdoch standing next to A.J. Ayer. Their juxtaposition jarred me. Each represents a very different view of philosophy and of life. For Ayer, science gives us knowledge; philosophy does not. Like analytic philosophers in general, Ayer cheerfully dismisses questions of truth, goodness, and purpose with which philosophers have wrestled in past ages as metaphysical illusions to be dissolved by logical-linguistic clarity. Any notion of life as primarily concerned with moral or spiritual growth, much less as a pilgrimage from egoistic desires toward the never achieved goal of perfection, is so laughable as to be unworthy of the effort it would take to unmask as a tissue of grammatical confusions. For Murdoch such a pilgrimage is the central human task. Art, especially literature, is one of the greatest aids in this journey. Unlike Richard Rorty, who also looks to literature as a guide for the moral life, Murdoch does not abandon philosophy. She believes that it, as well as a demythologized theology, have important roles to play. She even goes so far as to use the word "metaphysics" in the title of what must be her philosophical magnum opus.

Murdoch's presentation of her views calls to mind a person going into various shops, looking over the merchandise, and making comments to a friend about the merits, demerits, and usefulness of the items on display. Comparisons are made between what is seen in the shop called "Fact and Value" and something seen in the shop called "Schopenhauer" or "Wittgenstein and the Inner Life." Murdoch delights the reader with the rich, perceptive, and often unusual connections she makes. Some of the most troublesome issues we encounter as we try to understand ourselves as moral beings are engaged as she slowly develops her views in her examination of thinkers, religions, and works of art.

The core of her position has long been familiar to us from her previous philosophical writings and novels, and can be summarized as an update of Plato's allegory of the cave. We are to ascend from the illusions cast by the fire of our egocentrism to the reality made visible by the form of the Good. What is new in this book, in addition to her wide-ranging shopping tour, is the primary locus of her argument, the ontological argument. She has in earlier writings mentioned its importance, but here in a long chapter she rehearses the argument and some of the recent literature on it with the ultimate intention of placing Good in the logical space previously occupied by God. The Good is not a thing, nor localizable, any more than is God. But the Good is wholly immanent, even if it transcends the self.

The thesis of the book turns on the following passage, which makes what Murdoch means by the form of the Good, not wholly, but at least more intelligible than in any of her previous writings.

> Metaphysics is inspired by a gifted thinker's scrutiny of his own thoughts....The contrast between states of illusion (selfish habits or egoistic fantasy) and honest clarified truthful serious thinking suggests a moral picture of the mind as a continuous engagement with an independent reality. "Truth" is not a collection of facts. *Truthfulness*, the search for truth, for a closer connection between thought and reality, demands and effects an exercise of virtues and a purification of desires. The ability, for instance, to think justly about what is evil, or to love another person unselfishly, involves a discipline of intellect and emotion. Thought, goodness, and reality are thus seen to be connected. The intensity of Plato's vision of this connection forces him (if one may put it thus) to *separate* an idea of goodness as the supreme and fundamental requirement, the essential human aim or task, and to separate this idea in a unique manner from the

"A room with a breathtaking view of being and nothingness."

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imperfect hurly-burly of the human struggle. The idea of Good cannot be compromised or tainted by its inclusion in actual human proceedings, where its magnetism is nevertheless, and even at the lowest levels, omnipresent....It must be kept in mind that Plato is talking in metaphysical metaphors, myths, images; there is no Platonic "elsewhere," similar to the Christian "elsewhere." What is higher is, as Eckhart observed, inside the soul.

What I make of this is as follows: Reality, not what egoism and unpurified desires make of reality, is good. Reality, wherever encountered, whether through art, philosophy, religion, or the ordinary duties and failures of daily life, is purifying. We feel the attraction of reality, as iron filings feel the pull of a magnet. It draws us away from other attractions and at times overcomes the ego's powerful resistance. The Good is present in every good act, and every truthful and just thought. As reality, it is not "elsewhere."

Murdoch recommends that Good take the place of God for several reasons. First, we can morally manage without God. God can be, but morality itself, cannot be "thought away." Unlike God, Good meets the criteria of metaphysics: it is an unconditioned, absolute element in reason and reality. Second, with the rise of science, Christianity is fading. Third, we need a theology that can continue without God in our now sophisticated, come-of-age world. Fourth, religion can exist without a personal God, as it does in Buddhism and Hinduism. So too can a demythologized Christianity. Fifth, a supernatural deity is not only irrelevant, but harmful to the spiritual life. Sixth, but we are to keep, as did R.B. Braithwaite (*see, An Empiricist's View of Religious Beliefs*, 1955), Christian stories as enlivening spiritual images.

Whatever one makes of the recommendation to replace God with Good, it at least answers the question of Murdoch's relation to Christianity, a question that has puzzled her readers for a long time. She has frequently called herself "a fellow traveler." Now she applies to her position the expressions "neo-Christianity" and "modern Christianity," and cites with approval the words with which A.N. Wilson concludes his book *Jesus*, "Jesus has survived," even though there is very little about Jesus in her book. In short, she has given us her version of the long familiar position that reduces Christianity to morals.

It is not insignificant that the person on whom Murdoch most relies for her views on morality, Simone Weil, is not examined with anything like the attention devoted to Schopenhauer or Wittgenstein. Weil, however idiosyncratic a Christian she may have been, and however much she stressed impersonality and our "decreation," nonetheless prayed and taught people to pray. Weil was very familiar with the sort of objections to a personal God Murdoch raises. I am deeply puzzled why Murdoch cites Weil with such praise, but does not wrestle with this worthy person's devotion to God.

To put the point in another way, there is a one-sided concentration on God as Good that allows Murdoch to fill the logical space occupied by God with the Good. But Good is only one of God's names. God is also Creator, and the ultimate source of all power. There are inescapable questions concerning the existence and order of the universe. For a time it was generally held they had been "thought away" by Hume and Kant. We have recently learned that they did not succeed. Nature poses questions which are beyond the limits of science, and perhaps philosophy. On sheer intellectual grounds, it is evident that God the creator is a possible answer. Because Murdoch focuses exclusively on morality she does not encounter these questions, and so does not wrestle with the possibility of a Creator. Some of Simone Weil's most profound remarks concerning the spiritual journey from egotism to goodness that is central to Murdoch involve the struggle to bring together with integrity the notions of power and goodness, i.e., a Creator and the Good. From this point of view, Murdoch's judgment that God is a dispensable notion, intellectually and morally, appears arbitrary. □

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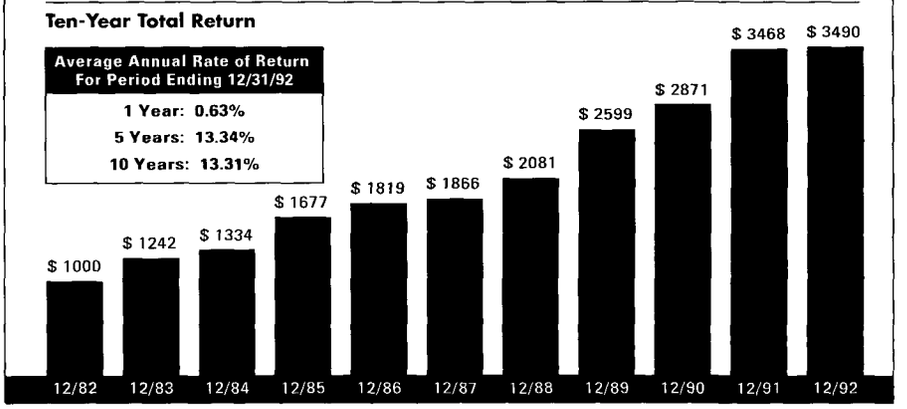

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NOT TONIGHT, WE HAVE A HEADACHE

THE CHILDREN OF MEN
P.D. James
Alfred A. Knopf, $22, 241 pp.

Molly Finn

It's no big deal if you're disappointed in a murder mystery you pick up for a few hours of entertainment, even if the author has been acclaimed as "the queen of crime." But in *The Children of Men*, the queen—P.D. James—has raised the stakes considerably and in the process she raises our expectations. Among the areas she addresses in this futuristic novel are a sterility of body and spirit leading to the physical end of mankind and the destruction of society, questions of individual and governmental power, religious belief, love, redemption.

James posits a world in which the human species has lost the ability to reproduce. The realization, in the year 2008, that not one of the generation born in 1995 could produce fertile sperm leads to "an almost universal negativism...like an insidious disease...with its...symptoms of lassitude, depression, ill-defined malaise, a readiness to give way to minor infections, a perpetual disabling headache." Most people have succumbed to this malady. Our hero, Theodore (Theo) Faron, historian and Oxford don, is disillusioned with his vocation ("History, which interprets the past to understand the present and confront the future, is the least rewarding discipline for a dying species") and fights the disease with weapons that are also his consolations: books, music, food, wine, nature. His cousin Xan, the dictator who calls himself the Warden of England, is immune to the disease, protected, Theo speculates, "by an egotism so powerful that no external catastrophe can prevail against it."

As the poor cousin regularly invited to the country estate for the summer, Theo was Xan's companion—but never friend—throughout their youth, and he later served as advisor on Xan's Council, a position from which he has resigned. When Theo is approached by a small group of dissidents who call themselves the Five Fishes it is because they think he can influence the Warden to carry out their program of reforms. With the introduction of the Five Fishes, the book changes from a detailed and depressing description of the death throes of the world into an adventure story about its rebirth.

The book is divided into two main sections with titles that reveal the direction the narrative will take, the first being Omega and the second, Alpha. Christian symbolism abounds. Although religious services are rare in the England of 2021, and the churches have all but fallen into ruin, it is in a church where Theo went "to listen to the singing, not to take part in an archaic act of worship" that he is first approached by one of the Five Fishes. This group habitually meets in churches. One member is a priest who celebrates Mass regularly for himself and the one other believing Fish. A child is conceived by two "rejects" (people who escape regular fertility testing because they have physical defects), is born in a woodshed, and is clearly intended to bring the human race back to life.

James's projection of how mankind is likely to respond to a bewildering turn of events is the most interesting aspect of the book. We should have been warned in the early 1990s, says Theo, with the "search for alternative medicine, the perfumed oils, the massages, the stroking and anointing, the crystal-holding, the nonpenetrative sex," when pornography and sexual violence became more explicit but figures showed a slump in the number of children being born.

"You'd think he'd *have the courtesy to hurry up."*

By 2021, people baptize dolls and gather to watch and celebrate the birth of a litter of kittens. Theo notes in his diary, written "as a defense against personal accidie":

> In our universal bereavement, like grieving parents, we have put away all painful reminders of our loss. The children's playgrounds...have been dismantled...the asphalt grassed over or sown with flowers like small mass graves. The toys have been burnt, except for the dolls, which have become for some half-demented women a substitute for children....Only on tape...do we now hear the voices of children....

In the book's most chilling passage, old people are weighted with sandbags, put on crumbling barges, and, to the accompaniment of a brass band playing "Bye Bye, Blackbird" and "Somewhere over the Rainbow," are towed out to sea. This procedure, known as the Quietus, is euphemistically referred to as "the mass suicide of the old." As part of its social program, the Council "pays handsome pensions to the relatives of the incapacitated and dependent old who kill themselves."

Witnessing the Quietus is a turning point for Theo, the book's only even minimally interesting character, who realizes that "faced with some abominations, a man had no option but to step onto the stage," and decides to see Xan and convey the demands of the Five Fishes. Before the experience he says of himself "I don't want anyone to look to me, not for protection, not for happiness, not for love, not for anything." Afterwards, "feel, he told himself, feel, feel, feel. Even if what you feel is pain, only let yourself feel." For the remainder of the book, Theo accompanies the Fishes as one of the five is captured,

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another defects, and the group goes into hiding, traveling in stolen cars, eating stolen food, racing, with several narrow escapes, away from the dreaded Council and toward the woodshed. In the course of this adventure, Theo learns to feel not only pain but also love.

Placing the words in the mouth of one of the five members of Xan's Council, P.D. James summarizes: "You [Theo] know what evils have been perpetrated through the ages to ensure the survival of nations, sects, religions, even of individual families. Whatever man has done for good or ill has been done in the knowledge that he has been formed by history, that his lifespan is brief, uncertain, insubstantial, but that there will be a future, for the nation, for the race, for the tribe. That hope has finally gone except in the mind of fools and fanatics. Man is diminished if he lives without knowledge of his past; without hope of a future he becomes a beast."

Because James is known as a writer of murder mysteries, readers might expect that the plot, the suspense of the unfolding story, the excitement of the chase would provide the main interest of this book. Unfortunately, the unfolding story, buried in a mountain of detail, holds little suspense, the chase little excitement. The framework of the book, all too plain to see, is never richly clothed; the numerous characters wander over a skillfully depicted landscape like so many sticks. It is too difficult to believe a redeemer will rise from the bed in the woodshed. The idea was a good one, but like so many of P.D. James's mysteries, this novel makes you wonder what makes her the queen. □

THE RELIGIOUS-FUTURES MARKET

THE CHURCHING OF AMERICA 1776-1990
Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy
Roger Finke and Rodney Stark
Rutgers University Press, $22.95, 328 pp.

James R. Kelly

With its big hypothesis, bold claims, and assured premises *The Churching of America* is sociology of the kind that used to be written before the ideologically tumultuous 1960s when blacks, women, and others humbled the universalizing theory that conceptually marginalized them. Finke and Stark claim that newly retrieved late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Bureau of Census statistics on religious bodies based on denominational self-reports (and statistically checked by Finke's model for translating pew numbers into membership estimates) allow them to make "major revisions in the history of American religion" and to "challenge the received wisdom" about why churches grow and why they decline.

This book is smartly written, the graphs and statistics are easy to read, and the analyses are enlivened with pungent comments about religion and those who write about it. Commentators, especially those conservatives who use "liberal" as a synonym for selling out, will find it easy to quote. The authors' theoretical framework is a hybrid of church/sect and economic theory (the Chicago style of unregulated competition). Committed secular intellectuals seeking a nonthreatening explanation of why secularization hasn't happened in America and elsewhere might especially find the authors' economic analysis persuasive. My guess is that the reader with some general interest in religion and some specific allegiances will at different times and in different moods find the book insightful, tendentious, and reductive.

Good revisionists, however, must first persuade us that what they revise is what we believe. With fair warrant, Finke and Stark assume we think that Americans were once religious and are now pretty secular. They assume that most students of religion think that traditional societies with religious "monopolies" were pervasively religious and that secular and pluralistic societies inevitably make religion insignificant and, indeed, that pluralism in religion is itself a primary agent of secularization. If there are more than 256 separate religious organizations in America, each considering itself more true than the others, how can any one of them lay claim to binding religious truths worthy of committed allegiance? The data contradict each point of this conventional wisdom and better support their counterargument that religious pluralism, which better than religious monopolies can appeal to diverse religious tastes, increases the aggregate demand for religion, just as unregulated markets are better than state-controlled monopolies in rousing and then satisfying consumer wants.

For example, on the eve of the American Revolution, probably about 17 percent of Americans were churched. "On any given Sunday morning," Finke and Stark drolly note, "there were at least as many people recovering from late Saturday nights in the taverns of these seaport towns as were in church." By 1906, slightly more than 50 percent of Americans were churched; today, about 62 percent claim active church membership. And even nonmembers show a brand loyalty. On no national sample has the percentage answering "none" when asked about religion reached 10 percent. Then why do we hear so much about secularization from both intellectuals and religious leaders? Because intellectuals begin with the wrong question and religious leaders confuse their faith with the market, say Finke and Stark.

The typical social scientist asks, "How can people possibly believe in supernatural beings and forces, and whatever drives them to make such irrational sacrifices in the name of faith?" When the question is posed in this way, "they have been virtually forced to frame answers that postulate personal flaws in those who believe and sacrifice." Thus, with more rationality (presumably like their own), there should be less religion. Finke and Stark adopt a contrary hypothesis which provides the motive power underlying their theory explaining the success and failure of dif-

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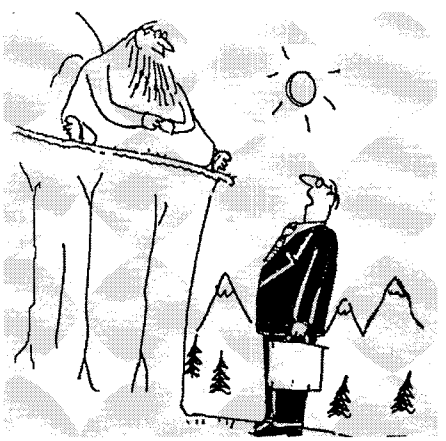
ferent religious "firms" in a potentially ever expanding religious market: "People seek a religion that is capable of miracles and that imports order and sanity to the human condition. The religious organizations that maximize these aspects of religion, however, demand the highest price in terms of what the individual must do to qualify for these rewards."

But while "magic" and "sacrifice" initially attract believers, in time they and their leaders become more affluent, more comfortable, and more established. Under pressure from their laity, the clergy begin to preach theology rather than faith, support respectability rather than enthusiasm, and soon the group suffers the fate of all complacent monopolies as it loses out to religious entrepreneurs with less to lose and more to gain. Thus, like IBM and General Motors, "the mainline bodies are always headed for the sidelines." Much as Detroit complains about the unfair market techniques of Japan, the corporate leadership of declining religious firms complain about secularization. One graph shows how the Congregationalists and Episcopalians lose out to the Methodists and the Baptists, nicely displays this "capitalist" theory applied to religion (figure 3.1, chapter 1). In the chapter "Methodists Transformed, Baptists Triumphant," the authors offer the troublesome suggestion that "it seems evident that the secularization of religion finds its fullest expression in seminaries whenever they define themselves as centers of scholarship." Product improvement, it seems, doesn't work on religion.

At this point *Commonweal* readers might be curious about how the authors' economic model applies to American Catholicism. Simply put, when Catholicism grew (till Vatican II) it behaved like a sect, energetically marketing itself to immigrants from native lands characterized by a complacent clergy without much religious competition. Catholicism's entrepreneurship resulted in a distinctive institutional system (schools, colleges, hospitals, etc.) offering the rewards of familiarity and acceptance to American-born Catholics still insecure in a suspicious culture. But Vatican II brought a decrease in product differentiation, an accommodation to secular society, and reduced rewards for buying Catholic. Finke and Stark approvingly cite Will Herberg's mid-1960s caution to those Catholic intellectuals urging the church to "slough off its old ways and bring itself up to date by adjusting itself to the spirit of the age. I say just the opposite: in all that is important, the church must stand firm in its stand against the world, against the age, against the spirit of the age—because the world and the age are always, to an important degree, in rebellion against God." But "with the increasing size and affluence of Catholic universities and the reforms of Vatican II, Catholic higher education became quite secularized."

Finke and Stark think it "unlikely that the American Catholic church will be able



"Buy low, sell high? Aren't there any other eternal truths?"

to halt its transformation from an energetic sect into a sedate mainline body." The reader who at this point thinks about all those considerable points of actual and potential tension between American Catholicism—contraception, abortion, the social teaching of the church, the pastoral letters, the church's hierarchical structure, the eucharistic miracle, the evangelical vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, etc.—will especially notice a disappointingly ad hoc quality to their argument. The authors do not even mention abortion, the ordination of women, the social teachings of the church, the sacraments. Although an important part of their theory is that religious firms lose membership as they lessen the demands for membership, we notice here that it is not any guiding theory but their own post factum judgment which they use to sort out the inventory of sacrifice. They give high grades to the older discipline of meatless Fridays. Regarding the high demands contained in *Humanae vitae*, they simply cite the economist Lawrence Iannoccone's remark that "the Catholic church has managed to arrive at a remarkable 'worst of both worlds' position—discarding cherished distinctiveness in the areas of liturgy, theology, and lifestyle, while at the same time maintaining the very demands that its members and clergy are least willing to accept." Regarding the decline in vocations to religious orders, they simply remark "it is no longer a good bargain except for those with a remarkable personal ability to transmute sacrifice into powerful religious fulfillments."

Readers can best evaluate the worth of the book by whether or not they share its authors' primary aspiration: The authors tell us that "the primary value of analyzing American religious history through a market-oriented lens is that in this way some well-established deductions from the principles of supply and demand can illuminate what might otherwise seem a very disorderly landscape."

Faith needs its metaphors and, at least since the 1960s, many sociologists realize they also need them. My own reaction to viewing churches as business firms is "sure." I'm sure we and church leaders often do. We can (and economists do) look at marriages, or anything, the same way. But this is in our less interesting moments. As with economic theory generally, it's not hard to apply these free-market principles backward into history and find that religious behavior conforms to them. I mean, if something declines we can later pronounce that it was because people no longer wanted it or they found what they think is a better way to get what they want. But this is mostly tautological, as the heavy ad hoc and post factum quality of their chapter on Catholicism shows. Furthermore, I'm not convinced that church/sect theory benefits much by being subsumed under a more theoretically pretentious economics. Arguments for the congruence between pluralism and religious vitality have been around for some time (Roger Williams, John Stuart Mill, George Simmel, John Courtney Murray), if not always appreciated. These arguments

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have the virtue of drawing attention to issues of conscience and religious truth. The chief utility of redescribing them in terms of supply-and- demand principles is to give some added weight to some plausible but highly contestable personal judgments about contemporary American religion and its future. □

BLUE COLLARS & PURPLE HEARTS

WORKING-CLASS WAR
Christian G. Appy
University of North Carolina Press, $39.95, 363 pp.

Murray Polner

I met my first Vietnam War combat veteran in the mid-1960s while teaching in a community college some sixty miles from New York City. One day, after I had spoken out against the war to a campus antiwar group, a neatly dressed student approached me. I remember him saying, the tension evident in his tightly drawn lips, that he objected to my remarks about the war. What did I know? He had been there and I hadn't.

From that moment on we talked regularly. As I wrote at the time, "I was struck by his anger, his intensity, his bewilderment." He came from an Italian-American working-class family, and his older brothers had all served in the military. Just ninety days away from free-fire zones and sweep-and-destroy missions, with a Purple Heart, he was unable to comprehend the world he left behind in 1965 when he was drafted or the horrors he witnessed at war. He was neither hawk nor dove, but in time it became clear that, as Christian G. Appy writes in this definitive and engrossing study of combat veterans and their economic class, something was eating at his soul.

That "something," writes Appy, an assistant professor of history at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who also attended a weekly Vietnam-veteran rap group for six years, was that many of these men—impotent in civilian life as sons of the lower-middle and working class—had become cogs in the world's most lethal military machine and "committed acts and took risks they never imagined themselves capable of—from the most heroic to the most savage—in pursuit of a cause they could neither win nor identify nor embrace."

What makes *Working-Class War* so worthwhile is that it looks into the socioeconomic backgrounds of combat veterans as a way of making sense of their military and postwar experiences, including the frigid welcome they received from an unforgiving public and government. Appy's conclusion is that Vietnam was a class war which drew its troopers—about 80 percent of them—from the poorer and blue-collar classes. He quotes one bitter veteran saying, "It was a case of business as usual. Instead of everybody getting drafted, people who could go to college often did; it was those who couldn't who went into the military." This sort of comment, widely expressed, reflected their profound resentment of people who lived in suburbs, whose kids went to college rather than basic training, and who eventually had better life chances than they. Appy argues as well that this antagonism lay behind much of the fury that was ever-present when workers flew "Love It or Leave It" banners or shouted down and beat up protesting college students, a proposition that Andrew Levinson wrote about in *Working Class Majority* (1975), that it was more often than not "class and class distinction" and not their support for a war they could barely understand that aroused blue-collar disgust. I remember one veteran, a self-described prowar vet, once shouting at me, "Where were the sons of all the big shots who supported the war?"

Much of this is by now reasonably familiar, thanks in part to Lawrence Baskir and William Strauss's classic accounting

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N. T. WRIGHT

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in *Chance and Circumstance* (1978) of who went and who didn't. Yet twenty-eight years after the dispatch of large numbers of troops to defend "freedom" in Vietnam, the reasons for the intervention remain unexamined at the highest political levels other than occasional babble about exorcising the "Vietnam Syndrome." And certainly few have explained at least to my satisfaction why public policy channeled poorer kids into the military.

We know, though we may no longer care, that the National Guard and Reserves were draft havens, effectively closed to black applicants, "whatever their economic status," notes Appy. Congressional, executive branch, and Pentagon families saw that their sons and grandsons were exempted; hawks, neoconservatives, columnists, editorial writers, and publishers who supported every step of escalation and who publicly thirsted for more bombing and violence made sure that their male issue stayed home one way or another; and many of our contemporary "chicken hawks" fled from military service but later, when they were too old for the military, shamelessly backed military interventions and a renewal of the draft. As Appy concludes, "The critics and architects of the war did the talking, while the sons of workers did the fighting." (Personally, I exclude here the relatively few brave souls who became COs, or who went to prison or into exile for their beliefs, and willingly accepted the consequences of their defiance.) But even more: Few now want to own up to the unfair burden placed on the working class and its possible implications.

Nor for that matter have many acknowledged or studied the complex reasons why so many working-class people *seemed* to support the war, a war that hardly benefited them despite what living-room heroes were repeatedly telling them. Polls taken at the time revealed that workers reacted much as did the white-collar and professional classes: Survey after survey showed that *workers* often favored getting out of Vietnam; in 1972, as Appy points out, George McGovern received a larger percentage of worker votes than he got from white-collar professionals.

No one then or now likes to talk about class in America. Then it was shrewder for Nixon and his apologists to prattle on about a supposed "silent majority" yet say nothing about the sacrifices their children were forced to undergo. Today, with millions of once loyal workers transformed into the detritus of a mismanaged and avaricious economic system, class still remains our dirty little secret.

The price we exacted from our working class in Vietnam may be common knowledge, though few Americans or molders of public opinion dwell on it very much; the sentiment remains that we gave them a wall and some parades. What more do they want? But the price for Vietnam veterans who could not adjust is still inordinately high. The Vietnam Veterans of America reported that in March 1992, 19.2 percent or one in five imprisoned criminals were veterans, a large majority of whom are Vietnam-era vets. About one-third of single homeless males are veterans. Veteran suicide rates exceed those of civilians while post-traumatic stress disorders and diseases resulting from the spraying of toxic defoliants continue to wreak havoc.

Let us hope that care, great care, will be taken in the future before our new president, who was a war protester, emulates Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon and dispatches American young people into a conflict, especially one that does not require equal sacrifices from our elite families, especially those who live or work in Washington, D.C. □

REVIEWERS

DIOGENES ALLEN *has been an avid reader of Iris Murdoch for over twenty years, largely because of her concern with human life as a pilgrimage from evil to good. He is the Stuart Professor of Philosophy at Princeton Theological Seminary. His most recent books,* Christian Belief in a Postmodern World, *and* Quest *were reviewed in* Commonweal*'s March 8, 1991 issue.*

MOLLY FINN, *a frequent* Commonweal *contributor, lives in New York City.*

JAMES R. KELLY *is professor of sociology at Fordham University.*

MURRAY POLNER *wrote* No Victory Parades: The Return of the Vietnam Veteran *and edited* When Can I Come Home?, *about draft resisters, deserters, and exiles.*

PATRICK JORDAN *is managing editor of* Commonweal.

IN BRIEF

THOMAS MERTON: SPIRITUAL MASTER, THE ESSENTIAL WRITINGS, *edited and introduced by Lawrence S. Cunningham, Paulist Press, $14.95, 437 pp.*

Like the proverbial Cheshire Cat, Thomas Merton may have departed but he keeps making appearances. In the quarter of a century since his death, not only have his writings been issued and reissued, but he has been the subject of a steady stream of books, studies, dissertations, and monographs. A recent catalogue from Credence Cassettes offers over fifty Merton tapes.

The century's most conspicuous and loquacious Catholic monk, Merton was a man of paradoxes, if not contradictions, a hermit attached to place who died a long way from home, figuratively as well as literally. The present collection of Merton's "spiritual writings," introduced and selected by the indefatigable Lawrence S. Cunningham, should be long in print. If it does not settle the matter of whether Merton is indeed a "spiritual master," it will certainly help keep the question in play.

Without doubt, Merton was a most complex and compelling individual who chose an unusual path. Yet his longings and his struggles were not foreign to a sizable number of his contemporaries, as his best-seller status indicated. Nearly half of the present volume is given over to autobiographical writings. In them Merton can be maddening for his self-preoccupations, exhilarating for his self-knowledge and self-transcendence. He was, in a sense, the Existential Monk in an existential age.

Cunningham takes up Merton's many facets in his substantive introduction and in preludes to each individual selection from Merton's writings. As readers of *Commonweal* have come to expect, Cunningham is simultaneously sure-sighted in his critical evaluations and personally generous. Here he not only notes the contributions of others to Merton studies but points out their most significant insights into specific aspects of Merton's career and thought.

But it is Merton himself who presides

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here, both in Cunningham's commentary and in the text: Merton the monk, the theologian, and the catholic writer attuned not only to his times but to the timeless. Thus, in one of the finest essays in the collection, "Rain and the Rhinoceros," Merton reflects from a solitary Kentucky holler on the nature of the nuclear threat and the equally destructive isolation within the individualist crowd. The essay first appeared in the glossy pages of the travel magazine *Holiday*. It must have startled that journal's comfortable readers. It gives us a keen sense of Merton's irony, the recluse who has withdrawn from the world but sees to the heart of its ethical and spiritual conundrums. Take this sentence from another essay, published seven years before *Roe* v *Wade*: "Choice cannot be free from the frustrating, tormenting division between good and evil. Hence, subjective choice cannot be an absolute."

It is not as ethicist that we look to Merton in this volume, however, but as master of the spirit. As this collection demonstrates, Merton's understanding of his own tradition was uncommon, developed over years of study, reflection, writing, prayer, and giving direction to others. His openness to other traditions, from Zen to Hasidism (it is unfortunate that his essay, "The Good Samaritan," which deals in part with the Hebrew concept of *hesed*—mercy—was not included in this volume) to Sufism, was legendary and has had a remarkable effect, broadening the Catholic spirit for a whole generation of Merton readers.

Yet for all that, the glimpses of Merton's own prayer and mystical sense, as Cunningham points out, glimmer at only select points. That a man of so many words and spiritual interests so seldom shook the foil of his own prayer life "in public" must remain something of a puzzlement. But perhaps that is the final "UL seal of approval" that marks the genuineness of this monk's passage. When it came to God, Merton wrote, "silence makes more sense than a lot of words." Thanks to Cunningham, we have both. P. J.

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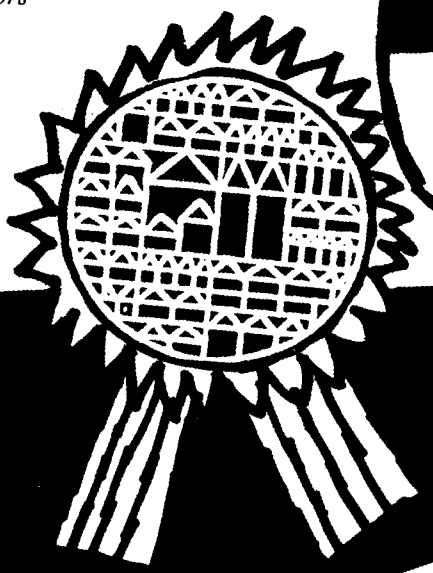

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